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TWO PACIFIC POWERS VIEW THE WORLD:

NEWS ON CBS AND TBS TELEVISION

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Abstract

This study looked at 309 stories from 30 randomly selected Tokyo Broadcasting System newscasts (Japan) during January-June 1993 and compared them to 283 stories on CBS newscasts (United States). Analysis showed that Japan makes less room for the outside world (13.9% of stories) than does the United States (20.8%). Geographic areas covered and the role of women as reporters showed significant differences, while news topics were highly correlated. Japan covered the United States much more thoroughly than vice-versa.

Presented to the Radio-Television Journalism Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Annual Convention, Anaheim

August 10-13, 1996

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TWO PACIFIC POWERS VIEW THE WORLD: NEWS ON CBS AND TBS TELEVISION

I. INTRODUCTION

Japan and the United States, although culturally poles apart, have in common their economic might. The U.S. $5 trillion economy (the world's largest) and the Japanese $3 trillion economy (second largest) together make up 42 percent of the world's GNP. Both of these economies support commercially financed, highly developed TV systems.

Japanese and Americans share a healthy TV appetite, but the Japanese stay glued to the tube longer. Each Japanese spends an average of three hours and 32 minutes per weekday and 4 hours, 23 minutes on Sunday watching television (NHK survey in October 1995), compared to two hours, 26 minutes a day for each U.S. resident (Nielsen survey in May 1993). The average Japanese household has its TV set turned on for eight hours and eight minutes a day.

In both countries, viewers over 55 have the heaviest TV habits. Among young people, the "subject of conversation in Japan among high school students is . . . often about television and radio programs," whereas U.S. teenagers would probably talk instead about the opposite sex (Sata 1991, 214).

In Japan, "intellectual snobbery is almost nil. . . conspicuous non-ownership of television. . . is totally alien in Japanese society" (Kato 1988, 315). The visual orientation of the Japanese and the strict dichotomy between uchi ("home") and soto ("outside") helped make television Japan's medium of choice; television permits the Japanese to stay comfortably inside while looking out at an uneasy world (Kitamura 1987, 144-45). In 1975, television surpassed newspapers in Japan as the mass medium with the largest amount of advertising revenues. Along the way, it killed Japan's film industry, which plummeted steadily from its peak of production in 1960 (Kato 1993).

The TV systems of these two economic and technological Group of 7 superpowers share many traits, but Japan nonetheless "is not historically and culturally part of the Western bloc" (Kitagawa, Salwen and Driscoll 1995, 24). The following discussion will concentrate on the Japan side of the U.S.-Japan equation, as its mass media are not so well known in the West.

Similarities: U.S. and Japanese Television

*Saturation. These two nations of TV watchers have both reached nearly total TV penetration, with ratios of one set per 1.4 people in the United States and one set per 1.8 people in Japan.

*Three dominant commercial networks. Japan's counterparts to ABC, CBS and NBC are Fuji, Nihon TV (NTV) and the Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS). Until 1994, Fuji had captured the largest audience share, but in 1994, NTV (21.2% share) pulled out ahead of Fuji (19.5%) and TBS (17.7%).

*Innovations in technology. Inventors Charles Francis Jenkins and Philo T. Farnsworth played key roles in the early history of U.S. television. At about the same time, in the 1920s and 1930s, inventors Kenjiro Takayanagi (1899-1990) and Hidetsugu Yagi (1886-1976), made important TV engineering innovations in Japan. More recently, the "Hi-Vision" high definition (HDTV) system was developed; since 1991, test broadcasting (analog system) has been conducted for eight hours daily.

*Minimal imports/ extensive exports of programs. The United States exports so much TV programming that some accuse it of media imperialism (McPhail 1981; Schiller 1976; Tunstall 1977). In the 1960s in Japan, one of many destination for U.S. exports, viewers could see Hoss and Little Joe of "Bonanza" speaking perfect (dubbed) Japanese. But by 1971, the balance had tipped (Ito 1990); Japan, like the United States, began exporting more TV programs than it imported ("Sekai ni. . ." 1994):

1971 imports- 2,000 hours exports- 2,200 hours
1992 imports- 2,843 hours exports- 19,546 hours

*Overseas bureaus. TV news operations in both nations support a roster of correspondents around the world, but not in Africa and South America. CBS has bureaus or correspondents in 11 cities (Kliesch July 1996, personal communication). TBS operates (in 1996) the 18 bureaus: Washington, D.C., New York, Los Angeles, Vienna, Paris, Berlin, London, Moscow, Sakhalin, Vldivostok, Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Seoul, Manila, Bangkok and Cairo.

Differences: U.S. and Japanese Television

Although a postwar phenomenon in both countries, television in its early days reflected the roles of victor and vanquished.

*Early diffusion. In 1947, the number of U.S. TV sets increased from 8,000 to 170,000. But defeated Japan could not even dream of a TV system until years later. On February 1, 1953, less than a year after the Allied Occupation ended, Nihon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) went on the air as a public service broadcaster--even though only

866 TV sets existed in the Tokyo area at the time. A few months later, on August 28, 1953, NTV began transmissions.

*Rooting. The wedding of the present emperor to commoner Michiko Shoda, whom he had met at a tennis court, turned Japan into a nation of TV watchers. The lead time between the couple's engagement in 1958 and the royal wedding on April 10, 1959, gave manufacturers time to campaign for TV purchases, which then amounted to more than a month's salary.

By contrast, an obsession with a sitcom launched the United States into the TV age. Castleman and Podrazik (1982, v) chose January 19, 1953, as "the point at which television became synonymous with American popular culture." On that day, both the real Desi Arnaz, Jr. and the fictitious little Rickey Ricardo of "I Love Lucy" were born into postwar America.

*Role of non-commercial television. Japan boasts a strong dual TV system. Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) does not command as large an audience (16.5%) as the top three commercial networks, but its programs pull in respectable ratings--much higher, relative to commercial stations, than PBS's in the United States. This gargantuan public broadcaster, which employs 16,000 people, has always had a cosier relation to the government than PBS does. NHK radio, established in 1926, became a military propaganda tool during World War II. Today, although officially independent, NHK has a reputation for "failing to challenge the powers that be" (Sanger 1993).

*Choice and diversity. Today in Japan, about 25 percent of households have cable service, compared with more than 62 percent cable penetration in the United States. The choices in number and foci of channels give U.S. cable a narrowcasted diversity, whereas Japan has fewer broadcasted programs of general appeal; even cable, which could increase diversity, mostly supplies network programs in areas of problematic geography. According to Sawa (1994, 18):

> most people tend to watch the same programs with high viewer ratings. . . It's a case of "me-tooism." And these programs become the topics of drinks over conversation and gossip over drinks the following day. That's Japan.

*Cross-ownership of print and TV media. Japanese law officially promotes media diversity and forbids concentration, but Japan's large, national dailies have complicated financial links to television that amount to cross-ownership. NTV and its 27 local affiliates (NNN network) are allied with the Yomiuri newspaper (1995 a.m. circulation more than 10 million); TBS and its 25 affiliates (the JNN network), with the 4-million-circulation Mainichi newspaper; and Fuji and its 27 affiliates (the FNN network), with the 2-million-circulation Sankei newspaper. The smaller Asahi Broadcasting Co., whose 20 affiliates form the ANN network, is allied with the Asahi newspaper. TV Tokyo, allied with the Nihon Keizai newspaper, has affiliates in only four cities. No such relationships--much less centralized newspapers of such--exist in the United States.

*Social context. In pursuit of the value of harmony, Japan uses television to project "a picture of what society should be," while "America uses television like a microscope under which every flaw and problem is closely examined" (Stronach 1992, 56-57). Harmony and homogeneity, while facilitating the Japanese economic miracle, can have a dark side; these values can make for reticent, self-restrained reporters and an insular, closed-minded audience. To counteract Japan's geographical and psychological isolation, kokusaika ("internationalization") has "become a sincere goal of Japanese governmental, cultural and educational leaders" (Wray 1990, 17). However, as Nakane (1988, 6) puts it, all the talk of internationalization is "a sure indication that Japan is still a closed society."

Purpose of the Study

U.S. TV news gatekeepers put together highly similar newscasts (Stempel 1985), but does the principle hold across borders? Do "universal standards guide news judgement in free market media systems"? (Kitagawa, Salwen and Driscoll 1995, 24). Or does the opposite case hold, because Japan and the United States each belong to "an altogether different frame of reference"? (Van Wolferen 1993, 11). This paper seeks to illuminate the Japanese and U.S. frames of reference by examining TV news. As the following review of literature will show, "Going beyond superficial appearance to systematically analyze the content and style of television news, one finds important differences between nations" (Krauss 1995, 47).

II. RELATED STUDIES

According to one of the few scholars writing in English about Japan's mass media, Akhavan-Majid (1990, 1006), "Despite the growing importance of Japan on the international scene, the last five decades have seen few analytical investigations of the postwar mass media in Japan." For example, at conferences of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication 1990-95, 26 papers focused solely on or included the mass media of mainland China and Taiwan, but only 11 treated Japan. To the limited body of studies on TV news, certain cautions apply.

Problems with Previous Studies

First, studies of network TV news content in Japan tend to analyze NHK out of proportion to its audience. Often NHK is compared to one commercial network (e.g., Miller 1994; Kodama et al. 1986), making NHK the thread for comparison between studies. Sometimes NHK represents Japan in a multi-country study (e.g., Cooper 1992; Straubhaar et al. 1986; Kitatani 1985), when in fact its news differs from the main three commercial networks (Cooper-Chen 1995; Budner et al 1995; Miller 1994).

Second, Riffe et al. (1996) recommend against consecutive-day or constructed-week samples in TV news research. But most previous Japan and Japan-U.S. studies have used those newspaper-suited time frames (e.g., Kitagawa, Salwen and Driscoll 1995, two composite weeks in 1991-92; Ishikawa and Kambara 1993, an actual week in 1992; Miller 1994, a composite week in 1992; Cooper-Chen 1992, an actual week in 1986; Kodama et al. 1986, three actual weeks in 1984).

Third, some studies lump together non-equivalent news programs. Budner et al. 1995 compared early evening U.S. shows averaging 30 minutes with much longer prime-time and late-nght "news and talk" programs, bringing Japan's daily news total to more than five hours.

Fourth, definitions of "international news" vary greatly, makaing comparability a problem. They range from including only news with no home-country involvement (Miller 1994) to a much broader view (Kitagawa, Salwen and Driscoll 1995, 25):

> news item dealing with events or situations outside the home country and those in the home country in which foreign nationals took part or which were presented as having relevance to foreign situations.

Findings of Japan-U.S. TV News Research

In the United States, all news gatekeepers share a "general notion as to what makes a suitable news package" (Stempel 1985, 815), but even at competing networks, U.S. TV gatekeepers go farther: they agree not only on topics, but also on specific stories. Previous research on Japanese and U.S. TV gatekeepers indicates partial agreement on emphases, but almost none on specific stories.

*Foreign vs. domestic news. The push for internationalization (kokusaika) has had some effect on increasing Japan's TV coverage of the outside world. Figures over time for "pure" foreign news (no home-country involvement) at NHK are:

1974 - 5.2% (Shiramizu 1987)
1984 - 9.2% " "
1992 -14.1% (Miller 1994)

By way of comparison, figures for the three U.S. networks' "pure" foreign news were higher (Gonzenbach, Arant and Stevenson 1991):

1972	20%
1982	22%
1989	24%

Kodama et al. (1986), who studied the same networks as this paper's focus, found "pure" foreign news about the same in both nations, but a strong domestic emphasis in Japan:

	CBS	**TBS**
Domestic	58.0%	74.0
Home/int'l	26.8%	7.9
Other nations	15.3%	18.0

*Countries and regions. A number of studies "suggest that the Japanese media give moderately more attention to Asian nations than do Western media" (Kitagawa, Salwen and Driscoll 1995, 24). Indeed, Miller (1994) found that at NHK, seven of the foreign news stories originated from Asian countries. NTV had fewer stories with a foreign dateline than NHK, but more widely distributed geographical locations: Asia--three stories; United States--three; Western Europe--four.

Larson's (1984) earlier study of U.S. evening newscasts covered a much broader time frame, from 1972 to 1981. He found three overseas regions to be most prominent: Western Europe, mentioned in 30% of stories; the Middle East, in 29.3%; and Asia, in 28.1%. On CBS newscasts, Japan ranked 13th in prominence, just after Syria, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

Just as the Middle East has established its place on the U.S. TV agenda, the United States has done so in Japan--but the reverse case does not hold. Krauss (1995, 57-58) observes:

To a large extent foreign news has come to be defined as news

> from the United States. . . . Even as Japan's interests in Asia expanded and more bureaus were set up, the special place for reports from the United States was maintained.

By way of confirmation, Kitatani (1985) found a 13 to 1 ratio (13 U.S. stories on Japanese TV news for every single Japan story on U.S. news) of Japan "over covering" the United States, while 10 years later, Kitagawa, Salwen and Driscoll (1995) found a less skewed 4 to 1 ratio .

*Topics. Kitagawa, Salwen and Driscoll (1995) found international politics/ government/diplomacy/foreign relations to rank as the top topic in foreign news on the part of both countries' TV news. Kodama et al. (1986), using different categories, found politics ranking lower:

	CBS	TBS
Society	50.3%	42.9
Politics	16.0%	12.0
Economy	9.3%	9.6

Miller (1994) found that, excluding daily sport scores and weather reports, both NHK and NTV had these top four categories: politics/government; economics/business/finance; disaster/ accidents; and crime. But the rank order differed because of NTV's greater emphasis on crime reporting.

In their study of foreign news coverage on U.S. network television newscasts, Weaver, Porter and Evans (1984) found as the four most common story topics: military/defense; foreign relations; domestic government/political; and crime/ justice/ terrorism.

*Story choice. Stempel (1985) found that ABC, CBS and NBC gatekeepers agreed on actual story selection at the highest levels of significance in his study. Adding in six newspapers, Stempel found that, in one week, only six stories were used by all media.

Thus U.S. TV gatekeepers, working with the same 22-minute window, apparently think alike in selecting stories. However, U.S. and Japanese TV gatekeepers apparently do not.

Cooper-Chen (1992) found that Japan and the United States had the least congruous "world view" of 10 pairs of nations studied. Only violent international events made their way past NHK gatekeepers: a ship collision, a plane crash and a war. NHK did not even mention the two biggest stories of that week: the non-aligned summit and protests in South Africa.

*Gender issues. The cultural value in Japan that men and women should occupy separate spheres (Hofstede 1984) unquestionably affects mass media content (Cooper-Chen, Leung and Cho 1995). In Japan, although "almost all newscasts are co-anchored by a female and a male" (Miller 1994, 89), that apparent example of gender equality is belied by the virtual absence of female reporters: for NHK, males reported 100 percent of all on-location stories; for NTV, males reported 94.7 percent (only one location story was female-reported).

By contrast, CBS has dramatically increased the number of news stories covered by women reporters, from 8.7% in 1974 to 20.2% in 1984 (Kodama 1991) to 29% in 1994 ("Visibility," 1995, 3). The percentage of women sending reports from overseas was much lower. Overall, women comprise about one-fourth of the U.S. overseas media corps (Kliesch 1991, 9).

Anchoring for now remains a male province. Tom Brokaw, sole anchor at NBC for 12 years, says of himself, Dan Rather and Peter Jennings, "It seems unlikely to me that, when we retire, we'll be replaced by three white males" (Briefs, 1995, 9).

Research Questions

How do modern Japan and the United States see their place in the world? Do these perceptions, as interpreted by TV news gatekeepers, coalesce across borders as they seem to within borders? This comparative analysis of TV news will address five issues:

1. How prominent is international news vs. the country's own news?
2. Within international news, what geographic areas predominate?
3. What topics/ categories predominate in news content?
4. What news items are included/ excluded when the two cover each other?
5. What is the role of women reporters and anchors?

This study will improve upon the methods of and update previous research. Riffe et al.(1996, 166) emphasize that, in TV news studies, the "half-life of research results may not be as long as researchers suppose," so constant updates are in order.

III. METHOD

Because of the finite, 22-minute network TV newshole, big stories can swamp samples in TV news research. A random selection of two weekdays a month is the most efficient way to pull a sample, with additional randomly selected weekdays increasing the sample's representativeness (Riffe et al. 1996). This study took the precaution of randomly selecting five weekdays per month (i.e., a different set of five days for each of six months).

Furthermore, since little difference exists between ABC, CBS and NBC (Gonzenbach, Arant and Stevenson 1991; Stempel 1985), one does not need to analyze all three U.S. networks. In the case of Japan, we also know that NHK stands apart from and should not be included in a study of commercial television.

The 6 p.m. newscasts of TBS were watched on the selected weekdays January-June 1993. Thus the Japan sample included a total of 30 30-minute newscasts. Of the three main commercial networks, TBS' newscast had the advantage of comparability with Kodama et al. (1986) and a simultaneous English translation (on specially equipped TV sets). For the United States, the 6:30 p.m. (EST) CBS evening newscast, for which abundant previous research exists, was judged comparable to TBS.

The unit of analysis was the story. Each TBS story was summarized. The summaries then were compared with stories on CBS newscasts for the day before, the same day, and the day after, using the Vanderbilt Television News Index and Abstracts. CBS stories the day **before** each randomly selected day of TBS news provided the highest number of stories in common for the two networks, so the previous day was used consistently for CBS. For example, if January 8 was coded for TBS, January 7 was coded for CBS.

Categories for coding came from a large study coordinated by the International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) at the request of UNESCO. The project analyzed foreign news in the print and broadcast media of 29 countries for a continuous and constructed week in 1979 (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1984).

Any story reporting events within the home country was coded as "home news at home" (domestic). Any story reporting events outside Japan on TBS (or the United States, on CBS) was coded as "home news abroad" in the case of home-country involvement or "foreign news abroad" for an overseas story with no Japanese/ U.S. involvement). The location if outside Japan/ the United States was noted. If a reporter delivered the story, the gender and physical location of the reporter were recorded.

For both newscasts, 20 topics developed by the IAMCR group were noted for presence in a story:

1. diplomatic/political activity between states
2. politics within states/ countries/other similar units
3. military/ defense: armed conflict or threat, peace negotiations
4. economic matters: trade, tariffs, imports, exports, output, sales
5. international aid: disaster or famine relief, military, education
6. social services: health, housing, illiteracy, status of women
7. crime, police, judicial, legal and penal
8. culture, arts, archaeology, history, language
9. religion
10. scientific, technical, medical
11. sports
12. entertainment, show business (except personalities)
13. personalitites (not politicians): sports, entertainers, others
14. human interest, odd happenings, animals, sex
15. student matters, education
16. ecology: energy conservation, pollution, other
17. natural diasaters: floods, earthquakes, drought
18. other
19. weather

20 accidents

Rosengren (1974) often used a "universe of events" in content analysis. By using each other's newscasts as a referent, one can construct a standard against which to judge coverage, revealing what CBS and TBS excluded as well as what they included.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study of TV news during January - June 1993 compared 309 stories from 30 randomly selected newscasts on TBS (Japan) and 283 stories from 30 newscasts on CBS (the United States). Included news items for each country were checked against each other and against a "universe of events" to determine patterns of exclusion.

The stories were also coded for story type (domestic, foreign, domestic news abroad, and other), story location, topics and gender of reporter. Two graduate students coded the TBS stories. A third graduate student recoded two randomly selected TBS newscasts, for a total of 55 stories. The authors then used Holsti's (1969) formula to calculate intercoder reliability:

$$\frac{2M}{N_1 + N_2}$$

where M = number of coding decisions on which the two coders agree and N_1 and N_2 refer to the total number of decisions by the first and second coder. Reliability was, for story type, 92.7 percent; for location, 96.4 percent; and topic, 94.5 percent. The third graduate student coded all of the CBS newscasts.

1. International News Versus Domestic News

Not surprisingly, as Table 1 shows, on both CBS and TBS, domestic stories dominated the newscasts (69.3% for CBS; 71.8% for TBS). More interestingly, the foreign news abroad category corroborates earlier findings:

1) Japan (13.9% of stories) continues to make less room for the outside world on its newscasts than does the United States (20.8%);

2) the U.S. network newshole for overseas stories has remained

quite stable at somewhat over 20% for more than 20 years; and 3) Japan's drive to internationalize, whereby its overseas coverage was inching up each year, may have reached a plateau (witness this study's decrease from Miller's 15.4% figure). Japan relies heavily on a home angle (home news abroad, 10.7%) to make overseas news palatable to its audience.

2. Dominant Geographic Areas

As Table 2 shows, different "non-home" regions captured the networks' attention January through June 1993. CBS focused its international news on Eastern Europe, the Middle East/North Africa, (South) Africa and Western Europe, in that order. The international news coverage on TBS focused on Asia, North America, Western Europe and Eastern Europe.

Remarkably absent from Japan's TV "map" were Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. Exactly matching Miller's (1994) findings, though in a different time frame from this study, both NTV and TBS ran only one story on Africa and one on Latin America. Television in Japan virtually excludes developing countries except some in Japan's own Asian region.

3. Topics/Categories in the News

The top story topics for CBS were crime/judicial/legal, politics within units, and military and defense. The top story topics for TBS were politics within units, crime/judicial/legal, and economy.

These categories for TBS exactly match Miller's (1994) findings for NTV and in the same order. Miller found a lower profile, however, for sports than did this study. Science/ medical news has a higher profile in the United States (where it ranks sixth, ahead of economic news) than in Japan (TBS has a few such stories; NTV had none).

4. Patterns of included/excluded news items

Judging from Table 4, a telescope spans the Pacific that magnifies the United States when Japan looks through one end and shrinks Japan when Americans look through the other, wrong end. TBS (Japan) covered 15 U.S. stories, while the CBS covered only three stories from Japan. Confirming the finding in Table 1, gatekeepers apparently believe that Japanese audiences need a home angle to "swallow" an overseas story. Even in presenting the familiar (to most Japanese) United States, eight of 15 stories had a home angle, such as the March 2 interviews with Japanese businessmen who had offices at the bombed-out New York World Trade Center.

With only three Japan events covered, CBS excluded much important news. A parallel table showing the events left out would surely include the fall of the LDP government and the creation of new political parties in June.

Table 4c shows limited agreement in items and emphases in the two countries' newscasts, considering all that occurred in six months. For U.S. gatekeepers, the Middle East and Bosnia loomed large, while the Japanese gave those stories barely a nod. For the Japanese, who had election monitors and engineers, Cambodia held their attention, but it did not interest the United States.

A high-profile, limited-duration event in Europe--such as the toddler murdered by two 10-year-olds in England and Audrey Hepburn's funeral in Switzerland--had an easier time passing onto the small screen in Japan than major, continuing stories from Africa (the South African political transition and the famine/ fighting in Somalia) that made U.S. news.

5. Reporter Gender

Table 5 shows the virtual absence of women reporters on TBS. Although that network had male-female anchor teams for its newscasts, only 10 of 89 reporters in the sample newscasts were female. Confirming Cooper-Chen's (1992) findings based on 1986 data, women are completely absent as foreign correspondents and nearly absent as domestic correspondents.

At the time of the study, CBS also had a male-female anchor team of Dan Rather and Connie Chung. More female reporters got air time at CBS (25.3%) than at TBS (11.2%). The CBS figure matches the 25% ceiling that seems to prevail at the networks ("Visibility. . ." 1995). More of the TBS stories were read by news anchors, deemphasizing the enterprise and credibility of on-scene reporting. By contrast, of CBS's fewer stories, more emanated from reporters.

U.S. women still come up short in terms of overseas assignments: Giselle Fernandez gave one report from Mogadishu, Somalia, and Susan Spencer reported on the Clinton-Yeltsin summit in Vancouver, accounted for only 6% of CBS' foreign coverage (36 reports). By contrast, the 10 men at overseas posts sent stories consistently (e.g., eight reports by Bob Simon from the Middle East and former Yugoslavia; four reports by James Hattori from Asia).

Table 1. **STORY TYPES:** CBS and TBS newscasts, January - June 1993

	CBS	TBS
Home news at home	196 (69.3%)	222 (71.8%)
Foreign news abroad	59 (20.8%)	43 (13.9%)
Home news abroad	20 (7.1%)	33 (10.7%)
Other or uncertain	8 (2.8%)	11 (3.6%)
Total stories	283 (100.0%)	309 (100.0%)

$\chi^2 = 6.66$, $p < 0.05$.

Table 2. **STORY LOCATIONS:** CBS and TBS newscasts, January - June 1993

	CBS	TBS
North America	199 (70.3%)	16 (5.2%)
Eastern Europe	34 (12.0%)	7 (2.3%)
Middle East / North Africa	12 (4.2%)	3 (1.0%)
Africa	11 (3.9%)	1 (0.3%)
Western Europe	7 (2.5%)	13 (4.2%)
Latin America	5 (1.8%)	1 (0.3%)
Asia (not Japan)	5 (1.8%)	34 (11.0%)
Japan	3 (2.1%)	222 (71.8%)
United Nations	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)
Other countries / uncertain	7 (2.5%)	11 (3.6%)
Total stories	283 (100.0%)	309 (100.0%)

Spearman correlation coefficient 0.0062 - absence of strong agreement

Table 3. **NEWS STORY TOPICS:** CBS and TBS newscasts, January - June 1993

	CBS	TBS
Crime, judicial and legal matters	58 (20.5%)	46 (14.9%)
Politics within units	50 (17.7%)	55 (17.8%)
Military and defense	33 (11.7%)	15 (4.9%)
Human interest	26 (9.2%)	19 (6.1%)
Diplomatic/political activity between units	22 (7.8%)	21 (6.8%)
Science, technology, medicine	21 (7.4%)	8 (2.6%)
Economy	20 (7.1%)	42 (13.6%)
International aid	10 (3.5%)	1 (0.3%)
Personalities (excluding politicians)	8 (2.8%)	6 (1.9%)
Social services	7 (2.5%)	7 (2.3%)
Natural disasters	7 (2.5%)	11 (3.6%)
Ecology	4 (1.4%)	5 (1.6%)
Sports	3 (1.1%)	36 (11.7%)
Accidents	3 (1.1%)	14 (4.5%)
Entertainment (excluding personalities)	2 (0.7%)	1 (0.3%)
Religion	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Education/student issues	1 (0.4%)	4 (1.3%)
Weather	1 (0.4%)	2 (0.6%)
Culture, arts, history, language	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.0%)
Other	6 (2.1%)	4 (1.3%)
Uncertain	0 (0.0%)	9 (2.9%)
Total stories	283 (100.3%)	309 (100.0%)

Spearman correlation coefficient 0.6539 - marked agreement

Table 4. **FOREIGN STORIES:** CBS and TBS newscasts, January - June 1993

a. TBS stories with U.S. location

Date	News item
1/27	*U.S. charges Japan with dumping autos
2/12	*Clinton and Watanabe meet in Washington, DC
" "	Japan heart patient in Pittsburgh
" "	Clinton confers with attorney general
2/22	*Dollar's fall vs. yen good for Japan's tourists
3/2	*World Trade Center bombing; Japan firms coping
" "	Branch Davidian cult standoff in Texas
3/9	Branch Davidian cult standoff in ninth day
" "	Woman with terminal cancer finishes LA marathon
4/12	Riot occurs at Lucasville, Ohio, prison
4/16	*Prime Minister Miyazawa in D.C.; has press conference
" "	*Sumo champ Akebono visits school in his home, Hawaii
5/10	*Honda Accords to be built 110% in the United States
5/14	Strategic Defense Initiative killed
6/3	Lung disease in Southwest kills Navajo teens

b. CBS stories with Japan location

2/14	Bargain hunting as Japanese economy turns down
3/8	*Japan likes Chrysler jeep
5/11	Meeting in Tokyo on Minke whales; status of whaling in Japan

c. TBS/CBS stories with other overseas locations

		# CBS	# TBS
1/7	Oil spill, Shetland Islands	1	1
1/24	Funeral of Audrey Hepburn, Switzerland	1	1
Jan.	No-fly zone and bombing, Iraq	2	1
Feb.	Toddler murdered by boys, England	1	2
Mar.	Threats to Yeltsin's power, Russia	2	1
Mar.	UN nuclear inspection denied, N Korea	1	1
5/13	Gunman holds hostages, France	1	1
6/13	Elections, woman premiere, Canada	1	1
Jan-June	Issues re. elections, Cambodia	1 (6/2)	7
Jan-June	Mid East peace, Palestinians, Israel	10	1
Jan-June	Conflicts in Bosnia	14	1

*=Home news abroad

Table 5 **REPORTER GENDERS:** CBS and TBS newscasts, January - June 1993

	CBS	TBS
Reports by males*	133 (74.7%)	79 (88.8%)
Reports by females$^+$	45 (25.3%)	10 (11.2%)
Total reports	178 (100.0%)	89 (100.0%)

* includes 34 reports from outside U.S.
$^+$ includes 2 reports from outside U.S.

$\chi^2 = 7.156, \quad p < 0.01.$

V. CONCLUSIONS

Do Japan and the United States each belong to, in the words of van Wolferen (1993, 11), "an altogether different frame of reference"? Judging from the 592 stories on two nations' newscasts, the answer is partly "no," but mostly "yes." This story's reliable, month-by-month sampling (Riffe et al. 1996) during January-June 1993 lets us make the following assessments with confidence.

Convergences

*Local emphasis-domestic news accounted for about 70% of both countries' newscasts.

*Geographic emphases-Japan and the United States share a mutual interest in Europe and--to stretch a point--in the United States. And both must plead guilty to geographic imbalance by virtue of their mutual neglect of South Asia, Latin America and good portions of Africa, even though both have the technological resources and overseas opertions to cover whatever news they choose. For example, both missed the political bombings in India during mid March 1993 that killed 300 people and the assassination May 1 of Sri Lanka's president and its consequences.

*News values-Both CBS and TBS emphasized crime and politics, while both deemphasized ecology, culture and social service news.

Divergences

*Follow-through-When covering international news, CBS showed a greater tendency to provide extended coverage. It was rare to see a second mention of a foreign news story on TBS. CBS was especially thorough in covering the unrest in Bosnia and the Middle East peace talks from January-June 1993. The only process story to capture a great deal of attention from TBS, the run-up to the election in Cambodia, had a strong domestic connection. The sole mention of Latin America could also qualify as a home news abroad story, as it described a volcanic eruption, something to which all Japanese can relate.

Clearly, having home-country personnel involved in potentially violent conflicts overseas brings a story into high relief: Cambodia for the Japanese, Somalia and Bosnia for the United States. Japan's peace constitution prevents it in theory from mounting a combat force and engaging in military ventures overseas, so a high-profile Bosnia and Somalia cannot exist for Japan. Indeed, the sending of non-combat forces to UN peacekeeping operations in Cambodia represented the first post-war venture of this kind for Japan. Still, South Africa's political transition and the Middle East peace process did not involve U.S. personnel, but U.S. coverage continued anyway.

*Insularity-Japan's kokusaika ("internationalization") efforts remain largely a myth in terms of news, given the low proportion (13.9%) of "pure" international news on TBS (compared with 20.8% for CBS). Japan has virtually no immigrant links with the rest of the world, as does the multicultural United States (but it has emigrant links with second- and third-generation Japanese Americans). Modern Japan "constitutes what may be the world's most perfect nation-state: a clear-cut geographical unit containing almost all the people of a distinctive culture and language and virtually no one else" (Reischauer 1981, 8).

Miller (1994, 95) states, "In a nation that produces much of the world's electronic news gathering equipment and has many foreign correspondents, international reporting is low." Miller (1994, 100) explains TV's insularity in terms of the high level of newspaper readership in Japan, which "means the broadcast networks leave international reporting to the print media." For this and other reasons, domestic minutiae in Japan often swamp important overseas stories. The ya-gamo ("arrow duck") saga is a case in point.

In a park in Tokyo, a reporter spotted a duck that someone had shot with an arrow that pierced the duck in such a way that it missed vital organs and spared the duck's life; it was even able to fly. As officials tried to capture the duck, the story grew bigger and bigger, often leading the national news. On Feb. 12, 1993, one of the days randomly selected for this study, the duck was captured and the arrow successfully extracted. TBS lead its national newscast with a five-minute report of the incident, including models of the duck, x-rays of the arrow and two on-location reporters.

Coverage of the advancing cherry blossom front from south to north as part of the news from February to June each spring may strike some foreigners as minutiae overkill and others as ultrnationalism, given the long association of sakura with the

Japanese spirit. The first pink blossoms in the Japanese archipelago appear in Okinawa. In late March, the first trees that bloom in Tokyo attract not only weather-report coverage, but on-location reporting within the main news as well. Indeed, reporters stake out likely early bloomers so as not to miss the grand opening. Coverage ends for the season in May when, for one glorious week, the sakura trees sport full bloom on the northern island of Hokkaido.

*Gender roles-Hofstede (1984) explored cross-cultural differences in thinking and social action by surveying 116,000 employees of a large multinational corporation in 1968 and 1972. On his Masculinity Index, Japan ranked highest of the 40 countries studied, with a 95 score. By contrast, the United States scored a middle-range 62, while Norway (8) and Sweden (5) scored lowest. In high masculinity cultures, women and men occupy different places; few women hold professional and technical jobs, and they tend to be segregated from men in higher education (Hofstede 1984, p. 177).

The moderate success of women on CBS (25.3% of reports) and near absence of women at TBS reflect Hofstede's findings of U.S.-Japan differences. In the world of Japanese television, woman's place remains in the studio, not out reporting the news. This study found that TBS had only 10 stories covered by a female reporter (one of them the arrow-duck story). TBS still abides by the separate, unequal spheres for men and women that Japanese society ordains.

Shortly after this study's time period, on July 18, 1993, the Liberal Democratic Party lost the majority in Japan's Diet that it had held for 40 years. In 1994, the government changed again. Then on Jan. 17, 1995, more than 5,000 people died when a 7.2-level earthquake hit Kobe; the government rescue response was criticized for its inadequacy and slowness. Will these cataclysms change Japanese society? Future research could track the effect of such changes on newscasts.

Is Japan, in fact, modern but not Western? Has foreign news reached a plateau of about 15%, as the United States seems to have reached a level of somewhat over 20%? Determinants of foreign coverage have been studied for Western nations (Rosengren 1977; Shoemaker, Danielian and Brendlinger 1991). More research specifically related to Japan could explain factors affecting its limited foreign coverage.

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NICHOLAS JOHNSON:
THE PUBLIC'S DEFENDER ON THE
FEDERAL COMMUNICATION COMMISSION, 1966-1973

A paper presented to the
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ABSTRACT

NICHOLAS JOHNSON: THE PUBLIC'S DEFENDER ON THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATION COMMISSION, 1966-1973

Despised by broadcasters and hailed by consumer advocates, Nicholas Johnson's 1966-1973 tenure at the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) was described as the most controversial in the history of the commission in a 1995 book. This paper examined Johnson's term as FCC commissioner to answer the following questions: 1) what events led him to be so outspoken?, and 2) what was it that caused broadcasters and others to criticize Johnson more than any other commissioner?

NICHOLAS JOHNSON: THE PUBLIC'S DEFENDER ON THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATION COMMISSION, 1966-1973

INTRODUCTION

Despised by broadcasters and hailed by consumer advocates, Nicholas Johnson's 1966-1973 tenure at the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) was described as the most controversial in the history of the commission in a 1995 book. Broadcasters turned purple with rage at the mention of his name.[1] The trade magazine, *Broadcasting*, was vindictive in its coverage of Johnson, referring to him as the "teenybopper on the FCC."[2] Even within the commission Johnson was criticized. FCC Chairman Dean Burch denounced Johnson as a "demagogue, irresponsible, . . . [and] disrespectful."[3]

Yet others from these groups praised him for his work. FCC Commissioner Kenneth Cox often sided with Johnson on major issues. He noted that maybe Johnson's tactics were more successful compared with his conventional play-by-the-rules approach. Albert H. Kramer, founder and former director of the public-interest Citizen's Communication Center, noted that Johnson tried to "bring the American system to bear on the processes of government."[4] Lawrence Leamer of *Harper's Magazine* observed,

> For seven years Johnson rained down on the broadcasters a plague of dissents. He became famous, much admired, the most celebrated advocate of citizen action in the federal government, but among broadcasters he was roundly despised, and *Broadcasting*, the industry trade magazine, predicted that when his term ended there would be "dancing in the streets."[5]

What makes these remarks particularly noteworthy is that Johnson was an unknown to broadcasting before his nomination and confirmation as commissioner in June 1966.

Johnson's appointment to the FCC did not alarm broadcasters. His reputation as Maritime Administrator, for the previous two years, was noteworthy for turning around "the barnacle-encrusted merchant marine."[6] Yet, *Broadcasting* described him as "no-crackdown artist."[7] However, at the end of Johnson's first year as FCC commissioner broadcasters were critical of his stewardship. This disposition would not change for the duration of Johnson's term as FCC commissioner.

His tenure as FCC commissioner raises some questions. There was no trepidation concerning his appointment, and his first months on the commission were quiet, although this changed at some point. Johnson's remaining years on the FCC were contentious, attracting broadcasters' anger. Certainly other FCC commissioners had drawn the criticism of broadcasters, but Johnson's was notable. Thus, after a few months as an FCC commissioner, what events led him to be so outspoken? In addition, what was it that caused broadcasters and others to criticize Johnson more than any other commissioner?

This paper examined Johnson's term as FCC commissioner to answer these questions. The writer explored the subject through broadcasting trade magazines, mass media magazines, the *New York Times*, congressional hearings, and FCC decisions. Various indexes were used to find articles concerning Johnson as FCC commissioner.

Articles from the industry magazines were examined to study the broadcasters' perspective on Johnson's tenure. This was contrasted with news items found in *The New York Times* and mass media magazines, including *Newsweek, Harper's Magazine, The New Republic, Saturday Review*, and *The Nation.* Comparison of news coverage between the mass and trade media offered information and insight on different viewpoints of

Johnson. In addition, these items provided information from the perspective of individuals who interacted with Johnson.

Government indexes were used to discover testimony that Johnson gave as FCC commissioner and before congressional committees. In addition, articles and books published by Johnson during this period were reviewed. Important to this study was an interview with Johnson as well as an examination of his Internet World Wide Web home page. The interview provided background information and insight to decisions made during his term on the FCC. His Internet home page was a gold mine of information offering an exhaustive bibliography of speeches, FCC decisions, published articles and books, and news items concerning him. This showed the Internet's potential as a resource for research.

The writer reviewed the articles written during Johnson's tenure, looking for events, themes, relationship dynamics, and news framing. His congressional testimony, speeches, and published articles were examined to determine his positions on issues, philosophy, and events of the period.

CATALYST FOR A PUBLIC DEFENDER

Johnson was nominated by President Lyndon Johnson to a seven-year term as an FCC Commissioner in June 1966. At the time, he had been serving as federal Maritime Administrator, a presidential appointment made two years earlier. He had been born three months after the FCC was formed, on September 23, 1934, in Iowa City, Iowa. The son of a university speech professor, he earned a B.A. degree from the University of Texas in 1956, and then a law degree, with honors, from the University of Texas in 1958.[8]

Upon admission that year to the Texas bar Johnson served as law clerk for Judge John R. Brown of the United States Court of Appeals for the fifth circuit (south). A year later he became a clerk for United States Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black. In 1960, Johnson became a law professor at the University of California, and three years later he joined the Washington, D.C., law firm of Covington and Burling. At the age of twenty-nine, Johnson appointed him to be Maritime Administrator in February 1964.[9]

According to *Broadcasting*, Maritime Administrator Johnson was known as "an imaginative man, one bubbling over with ideas on improving efficiency and, according to one congressional committee staff member, enamored of scientific innovations." He was noted as being hard working, brilliant, and aggressive. However, *Broadcasting* observed that Johnson had antagonized both ship builders and unions as Maritime Administrator.[10]

He controlled an annual budget of $350 million and supervised over 2,500 employees.[11] During this period, Johnson criticized the $600-million program of ship construction and operating subsidies and proposed and enacted new subsidy policies that guided allocations for ship building that increased greater shipping productivity. He also developed policies that eliminated rigidities in scheduled sailings and permitted subsidized ship lines to build ships abroad to save labor costs.

Despite the shippers' difficulty with Johnson, *Broadcasting* noted during his appointment that he was "an unknown quantity."[12] Johnson even confessed to his complete ignorance about issues confronting the commission. "I'm not only bring [sic] a professionally open mind," he stated, "but one that is practically open to this job."[13]

However, broadcasters might have been distracted since they were delighted with the appointment of Rosel H. Hyde as FCC chairman.[14]

Both Hyde and Johnson were nominated to the FCC at the same time. Hyde was first named to the commission in 1946 and was highly regarded by the FCC's staff. A conservative, he was considered broadcasting's friend since he believed in little regulation of the industry.

Johnson's confirmation process was uneventful. He offered little as to his position on issues concerning the FCC. Senator Peter H. Dominick asked him about the role of the FCC in determining the content of broadcasting. "That is a most sophisticated and involved matter as you are well aware," Johnson responded, "I would be very hesitant, I think, to express my views at this time without having first had the benefit of hearing from all those who do have an interest in it."[15] Senator Frank J. Laushe noted that Johnson had been the only Maritime Administrator to bring the merchant marine to a high level of efficiency. Based on this recommendation, Committee Chairman Senator John O. Pastore observed that people like Johnson were rare in government and needed on the FCC.[16]

As noted, *Broadcasting* reported that Johnson was an unknown quantity, but also "no crack-down artist."[17] It did observe that he was the youngest FCC Commissioner, at thirty-two, ever appointed.[18] The *New York Times* offered little on Johnson's appointment, focusing more on Hyde's nomination. It was noted that "the president believes that Mr. Hyde will provide a steadying hand at the F.C.C. wheel, while Mr. Johnson will furnish an excitingly youthful perspective."[19]

Johnson's appointment and first few months as FCC Commissioner generated little concern among broadcasters. In October, he attended the National Association of Broadcasters' fall conference in Minneapolis. He indicated that all he knew about broadcasting was learned while listening to radio at home in Iowa. Suggesting that his questions would provide some sense of what was going on in his mind, he asked about Cable TV, spectrum allocations, educational TV, and an "examination of what the broadcasters thought of their role in public service."[20]

Broadcasters provided candid answers to Johnson's inquiries. He even asked if there was something the FCC was doing that they wish would stop. In addition, he asked how the commission could better serve the public interest in its role as broadcast regulator. Broadcasters noted that they should not be badgered every three years with a license renewal. Many had been in business for a long time, fulfilling their public interest obligations, and they observed that the commission loads broadcasters down with paperwork.[21]

Johnson's closing remarks at the conference offered broadcasters optimism that his tenure would not trouble them. *Broadcasting* observed that Johnson said he

> believed a fundamental question was not whether licenses should be for a three-year or a five-year term, but rather whether broadcasters should have to go through the renewal process at all. . . . If it's really true that stations would continue to perform public service without regulations, then this is an utter waste of time and resources. It's something worth exploring.[22]

He noted that perhaps the commission could get together with broadcasters to develop a study to find out what the FCC was all about. He offered that this might better inform the FCC on how to efficiently use its resources and how broadcasters could better do their job with less FCC regulations. Broadcasters had reason for optimism at Johnson's first public appearance as an FCC Commissioner, but this would soon change.

The first few months of Johnson's term were relatively quiet, offering time to get acclimated to the job. However, an event occurred that served as the catalyst for Johnson's initiation as a public defender on the FCC. Johnson recalls that the proposed American Broadcasting Corporation's (ABC) merger with International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) was his "baptism of fire in a lot of ways."[23] ITT, a multinational conglomerate, had announced a proposed merger with ABC, one of the three major television networks in the U.S., in 1966. The merger would have to be approved by the FCC since ABC owned both radio and television stations.[24]

Both Commissioner Kenneth A. Cox and Johnson expressed concern over the proposed merger. *Broadcasting* noted that ITT's "massive response . . . to the questions of three FCC commissioners concerned about the company's proposed merger with ABC Inc., led . . . to more--and more detailed--questions from two of the commissioners."[25] Cox and Johnson felt that ITT's initial answers to the FCC's questions were incomplete and unclear. Through a letter, they asked more questions to clarify some of the answers, and to seek more information from ITT. In addition, the letter posed a hypothetical question which focused on a major issue in the case. ITT was asked if its foreign possessions "would adversely affect ABC's news-and-public-affairs programming."[26]

FCC Commissioner Lee Loevinger was critical of Cox's and Johnson's letter, accusing them of adjudicating by press release. The letter was considered a public matter and thus placed in the commission's public file. What Loevinger was really objecting to was that the letter was made available to the press.[27] Less than a month later in December 1966, the FCC approved the merger by a four to three vote. The majority based their decision on the premise that the merger would financially strengthen ABC. Johnson filed his first opinion, an eighty-five page dissent.[28]

Broadcasting noted that the majority had been ready to act for weeks on the case, but were waiting for a completed study of the antitrust aspects of the case. The FCC had decided to forego a laborious and time-consuming hearing. Instead, an oral hearing was conducted. Johnson noted that there was an absence of anyone representing the public at the hearing. However, the majority defended the hearing as " painstaking and thorough."[29]

In a recent interview, Johnson stated,

> I was absolutely stunned at the way that thing was handled. . . .They started off with the notion they were going to have [ITT's Chairman] Harold Geneen in for coffee in the chairman's office. And we're all sitting around the coffee table, chat with him a bit and approve the merger. . . . I just couldn't believe it. . . my jaw dropped! I said, "Look, god damn you at least have to have a hearing on this thing. You can't just do that." And then when they were willing to cite as one of the reasons for approving that merger, that ITT was going to put money into ABC and make ABC a stronger network . . .they refused to change that reason in their opinion, even after I put in the dissent that we found this memo indicating that the reason they wanted to merge was that ITT intended to take $100 million a year out of ABC.[30]

Johnson's strongly worded dissent criticized the majority decision. He stated that the majority's handling of this case "makes a mockery of the public responsibility of a regulatory commission that is perhaps unparalleled in the history of American administrative processes."[31] He observed that from the outset the outcome was a foregone conclusion.[32]

Johnson indicated in a 1996 interview that it was the ITT/ABC merger that caused him to be more vocal on the FCC. He observed that he "started off, both for solid reasons of substance and also for appearances, of being quiet, not writing dissents, listening, trying to learn, trying to find out what's going on." But this case astonished and surprised him.

The FCC would again vote to approve the merger six months later, after the Justice department asked the commission to reopen the case. The vote again was four to three with the same line-up of commissioners. This time Johnson was the principle author of a "blistering 131-page joint dissent."[33] Eventually the ITT/ABC merger was aborted by ITT on New Years day, 1968, while a Justice Department's appeal of the FCC decision was pending.[34]

As a result of the ITT/ABC merger case, Johnson assumed a "David-Goliath" role on the FCC. It was a role that would increasingly attract the anger of broadcasters and fellow commission members. In March 1967, Johnson criticized the FCC's performance in reviewing programming proposals of license-renewal applicants. He noted that the FCC created the appearance that it was using the public interest standard during license renewal, when it actually did not do so.[35]

His criticism of the FCC continued throughout his term on the commission, attracting fellow members' ire. FCC Commissioners offered rebuttal to his attacks, but it was FCC Chairman Dean Burch who denounced Johnson's pattern of criticism in 1972. In response to Johnson's thirty-two page opinion criticizing the commission's action on cable TV, Burch released a twenty page statement that *Broadcasting* characterized as "a rare unburdening of one public official's attitude toward another."[36] Burch described Johnson and his work as irresponsible and disrespectful. He labeled Johnson's cable TV opinion the culmination of "an incessant barrage of vilification, willful misrepresentation, and left-handed slander" that the young commissioner had directed at colleagues.[37]

Broadcasters also continued to criticize Johnson during his tenure. In February 1967, *Broadcasting* described the junior member of the FCC as an angry young man. The magazine noted that Johnson was "rapidly becoming the shrill and frequent critic of the action of his elders."[38] There were instances when broadcasters demanded that he disqualify himself from license-renewal cases. The Georgia Association of Broadcasters (GAB) felt that he "implied a threat against broadcasters at renewal time."[39] Johnson had remarked at a GAB function that although they may not agree with him then, they "had better agree once every three years."[40]

In a 1972 editorial, *Broadcasting* noted that the commission might lose Johnson if he ran for the Senate. While speculating about his replacement, the industry trade journal observed that if this event should occur, "it can only elevate the agency's standards of performance and responsibility."[41] In the editorial it was noted that there was "neither room not disposition here to review the record of Mr. Johnson's destructive service."[42]

The mass media offered a different perspective on Johnson's service on the FCC. In 1967, *Newsweek* noted that Johnson was making waves at the commission. He and Cox had recently used the renewal of 206 radio station licenses to rebuke the FCC for failing to demand a "minimum of public service programming."[43] The magazine noted that half of Johnson's twenty-two opinions so far were dissents. The article observed that he was clearly different from the lackluster Chairman Hyde and noted that critics of broadcasting were hoping that Johnson was being groomed to replace Hyde.[44]

Ironically, *Business Week*, with its business readership, indicated in August 1969 that the only cardinal sin that Johnson had committed, according to broadcasters, was to tell the public how to complain effectively to the FCC. The magazine compared the broadcast industry's encounter with Johnson to "General Motors going after Ralph Nader."[45] Although not a mass media magazine, *Advertising Age* observed that "if diversity of viewpoint is important, the long-range danger at the FCC may be from lack of advocates like Nick Johnson."[46]

The *New York Times* in a March 1970 review of Johnson's book, *How to Talk Back to Your Television*, observed that his role on the commission was that of "public defender instead of industry apologist."[47] Christopher Lydon in an *New York Times* article in December 1970 discussed Johnson's criticism of the Nixon administration's use of television. The news item observed that Johnson's attack cited numerous items familiar to readers, such as Vice President Spiro Agnew's attack on TV commentators. Johnson was noted as saying that no administration before had assaulted the broadcasters as Agnew did. Lydon reported that Johnson said, "The press bears a special opportunity and responsibility in this regard. . . . It must investigate and expose the charades and facades."[48] The news article was not critical of Johnson.

Robert Lewis Shayon, in the *Saturday Review* in April 1969, noted that the main thrust of Johnson's work was directed at creating "a healthier level of competition in the communications industry, particularly broadcasting."[49] In a December 1971 issue of *The*

New Republic, he observed, "It is an anomaly bordering on absurdity that so public-spirited an FCC commissioner cannot be reappointed."[50] Shayon wrote that even Johnson's critics did not deny that he has been right on the major issues.[51]

Johnson's career as FCC commissioner was controversial and adversarial. It was the ABC/ITT merger case that served as the catalyst for him to begin his crusade as the public defender on the FCC. It was a role that he would play for the duration of his seven-year term. However, historically other commissioners also had been critical of the broadcast industry. The question then is why Johnson was characterized as the most controversial and hated commissioner ever to serve on the FCC.

THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL COMMISSIONER

In an April 1969 article in the *Saturday Review*, Shayon observed that the FCC had gone through activist phases before, noting that "rebel commissioners have come and gone" from the FCC.[52] Commissioners James L. Fly (1939-1944), Clifford J. Durr (1941-1948), Newton N. Minow (1961-1963), and Emil W. Henry (1962-1966) were noteworthy for their activism on the commission.[53] So what was it that set Johnson apart from these earlier activists? Why was he considered the most hated commissioner in the history of the FCC?

In a 1996 interview with Johnson, he offered some observations concerning his notoriety. He felt that a variety of things he did invoked the broadcasters' wrath. Johnson noted that they were troubled by the substance of what he was saying, the fact that he liked to deal in ideas, by his thinking out loud, by his public criticism of them, and by a person who was not one of them exercising authority over their industry.[54]

The substance of Johnson's criticism went to the heart of many issues at the FCC. He wrote numerous long dissents that were often used by the courts to overturn an FCC decision.[55] Johnson's approach to sounding out ideas and thinking out loud was evident in his first public meeting with broadcasters. As mentioned earlier, he verbally wondered if stations needed to go through a licensing process, suggesting that the FCC and broadcasters should study the subject.[56] However, it was his other ideas, such as the formation of community groups to monitor and get involve with local broadcasters, that probably angered them.[57]

As mentioned earlier in this paper, Johnson publicly criticized broadcasting. In addition, his education and background clearly indicated that he was not from the broadcasting industry. These would be enough to enrage broadcasters. However, another element was left out. What Johnson did was educate the public on their rights in the broadcasting system. He informed them that the broadcaster was using the public's property, and that they had a right to see that this was used responsibly. Johnson wrote in one article,

> though you may not know it, you can, and should, have a voice in deciding who will operate radio and TV stations in your community. This is the citizen's ultimate control over broadcast programming. . . . A broadcaster is like an elected official, and his license entitles him to no more than a three-year term, after which he must either have his license renewed by the FCC or be turned out of office. You--his constituents--who are supposed to vote in this election often do not even know it is being held.[58]

Johnson not only informed the public of its rights concerning the broadcasters' responsibilities to the communities they serve, but he set an example to the public through his criticism of both the broadcasters and the FCC. Moreover, he did not follow the traditional route of quietly issuing dissents; instead, he took his message to the public. He accomplished this through a capable and idealistic staff with his assistants coming from Ivy League law schools. The output from Johnson's office was phenomenal. Leamer observed that "Johnson spoke or wrote on practically every area that touched communications."[59]

While other commissioners spoke to various audiences, usually broadcasters, it was a combination of the message and the amount of speeches that Johnson gave that set him apart. During his term, Johnson spoke more than 100 times to various audiences covering such subjects as broadcasting's local service, the public interest and broadcasting, television and violence, and the new consumerism. He was a guest on such shows as "Dick Cavett", "Face the Nation", "The Mike Douglas Show", and "Donahue" and was the only FCC Commissioner ever to be featured on the cover of *The Rolling Stone*.[60]

In addition to his speeches and television appearances, Johnson published a tremendous amount of material while on the FCC. During his seven-year tenure at the FCC, he published over 350 articles in various publications such as *McCalls, TV Guide, Playboy, Columbia Journalism Review, Saturday Review, The New York Times, The New Republic, The United States Law Week, The Washington Post, Rolling Stone,* and the *Chicago Tribune*. The titles for the articles covered a wide range of issues such as "Media Concentration," "The Wasteland Revisited," "The New Consumerism," "Tune In: They're Your Air Waves," and "What Do We Do About Television." In addition he wrote a book, *How to Talk Back to Your Television Set*.[61]

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In a December 1973 interview with FCC Commissioner Cox, *Broadcasting* observed,

> He had often sided with Commissioner Johnson on the major issues but he [Cox] played the game by more conventional rules. Johnson had "succeeded' in the tactics he employed. "Maybe he did better than I." As proof, he cites the hundreds of petitions that have been filed with the commission to deny license-renewal applications. "He didn't go out and file all those petitions. People did who were encouraged by him."[62]

Johnson taught the public about their rights concerning broadcasting, and he did it unconventionally by going to them through articles, speeches, and television appearances. It was this, combined with his ideas and the substance of his criticism, that enraged the broadcasters.

CONCLUSION

Johnson's sin was that he did not play by the traditional rules. Instead of quietly dissenting, he publicized his criticism of the FCC and the broadcasting industry. More important, he went to the public and informed them of their rights. He told them that the airwaves were public property, and that it was within their rights to see it used responsibly. He enlightened them by example through articles and speeches that broadcasters were accountable to the public. Yet it was his desire to educate and get the public involved in the regulatory process that enraged broadcasters.

In a April 1969 article, *Commonweal* noted,

> unlike most decorative liberals on regulatory commissions, he has broken the cardinal rule of the power game by taking his case before a broader public constituency. . . . Johnson has shamed one or two and occasionally a majority of his fellow commissioners into representing the public, rather than the industry, interest.[63]

Johnson moved outside the system and stirred things up. During his seven-year tenure he became famous and admired as an advocate of citizen action in government. However, to broadcasters he represented a threat to the status quo, an FCC looking after their interests.

Johnson's public criticism and lengthy dissents did influence the FCC. Ironically, in a December 1973 retrospect of his tenure, *Broadcasting* noted negatively that "fear of Johnson's dissents persuaded the commission on several occasions to modify positions they were considering. And in a number of instances when he did not persuade the commission to change course, the dissenting opinions he wrote figured in court reversals of commission actions."[64] Disapproved of by broadcasters, Johnson's approach was effective in making the FCC more responsive to the public's interest.

NOTES

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[1] Gerald V. Flannery, ed., *Commissioners of The FCC: 1927-1994* (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1995), 147.

[2] "Teenybopper on the FCC," *Broadcasting*, March 13, 1967, 94.

[3] "Burch lets fly at Johnson," *Broadcasting*, February 21, 1972, 27.

[4] Leonard Zeindenberg, "Retrospective: Seven Years And Five Months: A Look Back at The Tenure of Nick Johnson," *Broadcasting*, December 10, 1973, 24.

[5] Lawrence Leamer, "The Sunset Ride of a TV Reformer: Nicholas Johnson's Career as a Flower in The Petrified Forest," *Harper's Magazine*, December 1973, 22-32.

[6] "Logic Not Emotion," *Broadcasting*, June 27, 1966, 32.

[7] "The New FCC," *Broadcasting*, June 27, 1966, 122.

[8] "Nicholas Johnson," *Current Biography*, 1968, 203.

[9] Flannery, *Commissioners of The FCC: 1927-199*, 147.

[10] "Logic Not Emotion," 32.

[11] Ibid.

[12] "Now it's The Hyde Era at The FCC," *Broadcasting*, June 27, 1966, 29.

[13] "Logic Not Emotion," 32.

[14] Broadcasters were delighted because they saw Hyde's appointment as an indication that an era had ended. Newton Minnow and E. William Henry had been sharply critical of broadcasters, offering sweeping proposals for change. Known as the new frontier period, broadcasters felt that with Hyde at the helm the commission would calm down. ("Now it's the Hyde era at the FCC," *Broadcasting*, 29).

[15] U. S. Congress, Senate Committee on Commerce Hearings on Sundry Nominations. 89th Congress, 2nd Session, serial 89-84, June 23, 81.

[16] Ibid., 80.

[17] "The New FCC," 122.

[18] "Now it's The Hyde Era at The FCC," 29.

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[19] Jack Gould, "The President's Stand: On the FCC, Education," *The New York Times*, July 3, 1966, II, 11:1.

[20] "Nick Johnson Asks Questions: Commissioner Asks NAB Conference How FCC Can Best Do Its Job," *Broadcasting*, October 31, 1966, 53.

[21] Ibid., 54.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Telephone interview, Nicholas Johnson, February 27, 1996.

[24] The FCC does not regulate the television networks. However, all radio and television ownership changes must be approved by the FCC, to determine if they are in the public interest. All three television networks own radio and television stations. Thus, the FCC indirectly regulates the networks via station ownership. A change in network ownership would require FCC approval.

[25] "ITT Asked to Bare More Information: Cox and Johnson Want Still More Data on Merger, Loevinger Assails 'Trial by Press Release,'" *Broadcasting* November 28, 1966, 62.

[26] Ibid. The commissioner's hypothetical question concerning news coverage was in response to ITT's Chairman Geneen observation that "there can be no legitimate fear that the merger will adversely affect ABC's news-and-public-affairs programming." The commissioners were concerned since ITT owned foreign telephone companies. Their hypothetical question conjectured that if ITT owned a telephone utility in a country ruled by a military dictatorship, the government could force it to kill any adverse news programming on ABC. (Ibid.)

[27] Ibid.

[28] "New Giant in Broadcasting ," *Broadcasting*, December 26, 1966, 21-22.

[29] Ibid., 24.

[30] Telephone interview, Nicholas Johnson.

[31] "New Giant in Broadcasting," 21.

[32] Ibid.

[33] "For ABC, ITT: 30 Days to Sweat," *Broadcasting*, June 26, 1967, 29.

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[34] Nicholas Johnson, "The Media Barons and The Public Interest: An FCC Commissioner's Warning," *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 1968, 46.

[35] "Johnson Wants to Uplift Programs," *Broadcasting*, March 13, 1967, 46.

[36] "Burch lets fly at Johnson," 27.

[37] Ibid.

[38] "Angry Young Man," *Broadcasting*, February 6, 1967, 94.

[39] Another Broadside Against Johnson," *Broadcasting*, October 13, 1969, 72.

[40] Ibid. During this period, broadcast station licenses were renewed every three years.

[41] "Cooling It," *Broadcasting*, March 13, 1972, 74.

[42] Ibid.

[43] "Making Waves," *Newsweek*, April 10, 1967, 87.

[44] Ibid.

[45] "Trying to Swat the FCC's Gadfly," *Business Week*, August 30, 1969.

[46] "Nick Johnson's Book Shows Why FCC Commissioner Worries Broadcasters," *Advertising Age*, March 16, 1970, 122.

[47] John Leonard, "Book of The Times," *The New York Times*, March 5, 1970, 37

[48] Christopher Lydon, "Government by TV Charged by Johnson of F.C.C.," *The New York Times*, December 14, 1970, 87. Johnson accused the Nixon administration of manipulating news events and the suppression of dissent.

[49] Robert Lewis Shayon, "Nicholas Johnson vs. *Broadcasting*: FCC's Teenybopper Under Fire," *Saturday Review*, April 12, 1969, 82.

[50] Robert Lewis Shayon, "Two Bites of the Apple," *The New Republic*, December 11, 1971, 33.

[51] Ibid., 22.

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[52] Shayon, "Nicholas Johnson vs. *Broadcasting*: FCC's Teenybopper Under Fire," 82

[53] Fly inherited a weak FCC. He served as chairman from 1939-1944. During this period, he developed the commission into a strong agency that engaged the broadcasters in long and dirty battles. Durr served on the commission from 1941-1948. He was noted as fighting quietly and steadily for the people's interest. He helped to prevent advertising control of radio, advocated balanced presentation of issues on the air, and promoted the provision of radio service for the one-third of the U.S. that was outside the daytime service area. Newton Minow served as FCC chairman from 1961-1963. Minow's tenure was distinguished for its vigorous application of the law. He became famous for his 'vast wastelands' speech, when criticizing television programming before a gathering of broadcasters. Emil W. Henry served as FCC commissioner from 1962-1966. When Minow left the commission Henry was appointed chairman. He was instrumental in reducing the influence of the three networks on evening TV programs. Henry pointed out broadcasting's shortcomings, but he usually did it with tolerance and humor (Flannery, *Commissioners of The FCC*, 60, 66, 126 & 129).

[54] Telephone interview, Nicholas Johnson.

[55] Shayon, "Two Bites of the Apple," 22.

[56] "Nick Johnson Asks Questions," *Broadcasting*, 53.

[57] Nicholas Johnson, "What You Can Do to Improve TV," *Harper's Magazine*, February 1969, 18-20.

[58] Ibid., 15.

[59] Leamer, "The Sunset Ride of a TV Reformer," 26.

[60] Nicholas Johnson, *Nicholas Johnson Archive* [on-line], February 23, 1996, Available: Http://www.sunnyside.com/pub/njohnson/biblio/biblio03.txt and Http://www.sunnyside.com/pub/njohnson/personality/njresume.txt

[61] Ibid.

[62] Zeindenberg, "Retrospective: Seven Years and Five Months: A Look Back At The Tenure of Nick Johnson," 24.

[63] "Rippling The Waves," *Commonweal*, April 4, 1969, 60.

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[64] Zeindenberg, "Retrospective: Seven Years and Five Months: A Look Back At The Tenure of Nick Johnson," 26.

News Tips, TV Viewers and Computer Links:
A Follow-Up Story

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ABSTRACT

Local television increasingly invites comment from its viewers via computer links. A study examined follow-through by news executives who, one year earlier, planned to use such technology to get news tips. Respondents reported widely varying levels of effort, technical approaches and degrees of success. The telephone still brings in far more tips. Research into audience attitudes toward such access is suggested.

News Tips, TV Viewers and Computer Links: A Follow-Up Story

Computer-based conversations have been launched during this decade throughout the U. S. media marketplace. However, computer relationships between television newsrooms and television audiences remain tentative. This is true in particular of the paths by which viewers might hope to influence the selection and reporting of news.

News dominates local programming in most markets. It could become a prime beneficiary of television's emerging computer connections to audiences. But up till now--due to management priorities, organizational inertia, journalistic resistance or other factors--opportunities for viewers to affect *news outcomes* have amounted to only a fraction of the computer functions established by stations.

One of a small but significant class of traditional viewer contributions to the journalistic process is the "news tip"--a bit of information which can give rise to stories or help reporters follow up on continuing stories. Such tips often are solicited by news organizations and usually are passed along by telephone.

However, in a 1995 study of local news organizations' efforts at outreach to audiences, a majority of respondents reported that they did or soon would encourage viewers to contribute news ideas via electronic mail (Upshaw, 1996).

This paper presents findings of a follow-up survey--a view of how broadly and successfully stations have executed those plans--and considers their implications for the viewer and the television journalist.

THE NEWS VIEWER'S VOICE

From one perspective, audiences already influence all television content. They do this through their channel-changers. Viewers spurn one show and flock to another, encouraging the continuation of the latter and the extinction of the former (O'Connor, 1995; Mifflin, 1995). But this watch/no-watch dynamic is only binary, a crude feedback device. Researchers must dig deep to learn more precisely what viewers want--in entertainment or in news.

Technology could provide greater access: Full and agile "interactivity" giving TV audiences more direct and immediate say over content and program structure is being tested. The programmer Tartikoff promised viewers that in an approaching interactive future, "You will choose what you want to watch, when you want to watch" (Thomas, 1994). So far, though, viewers cannot inject their views and tastes directly into programs under construction; they cannot, for example, rewrite a Jerry Seinfeld joke just before he delivers it.

Whether viewer input via computer links becomes desirable just because it's possible is in question. Television news generally has not welcomed outsiders' involvement beyond that incorporated in long-established habits and routines which facilitate news production (Davie, 1993; Hansen, 1994; Neuwirth, 1988).

However, tips from viewers long have been a well-supported part of those newsroom routines. McManus (1994) portrays tips as an element of "moderately active discovery" as well as "highly active discovery" of news by journalistic organizations. (Many stations, of course, now regularly welcome unsolicited news in the form of video footage from amateurs in the audience [Warren, 1990]).

News tips range from breathless eyewitness reports of "spot" news, such as fresh crimes or fires in progress, to complex proposals for investigative series. News managers are free to set limits on who may apply a hand to the journalistic potter's wheel and to what degree. Knowing this, viewers often write or call to offer new material. To maximize this influx, newscasts often solicit tips on-screen, displaying assignment-desk telephone numbers--and, increasingly, E-mail addresses.

E-mail and other computer connections, although limited by consumers' access to computers with modems, are becoming multi-purpose tools for local television. The author's earlier survey (Upshaw, 1995) found news executives planning to use their existing or planned E-mail viewer links to run polls, expand news choices and for other purposes.

The *most heavily cited* purpose--claimed by 69.5 percent of respondents--was to "get news tips". However, to "promote station image" ran a close second (62/3%), and higher ratings and improved demographics were next. Thus were commercial priorities arrayed against journalistic ones (if opposition is the correct interpretation).

Some might call these indications schizoid or confusing; they were preliminary at best, like most findings from a rapidly evolving medium. Arguably, they at least reflected the contradictory forces at work in television news: It tries to do well by doing good--to make money for the station by serving community needs --but the two goals do not always mesh.

"THE 'NET" AND THE SURVEY METHOD

Citizens' power to communicate via computer is increasing, but the rate and current extent of this growth is unclear. Modem penetration appears to vary widely from one city to the next and to lean heavily on socioeconomic factors. The resulting market uncertainties may act as a drag on television's expansion of on-line interaction with viewers.

A study by a veteran media consulting firm indicated high general levels of Internet use--that, for example, 37 million people in the U.S. and Canada had Internet access and 2.5 million had made purchases through the World Wide Web (Nielsen, 1995). But the findings were disputed by a participating scholar who said the survey sample was skewed toward older, more affluent and better educated people than the population as a whole (Lewis, 1995). Similarly, almost two-thirds of the growth in Internet use during one recent year was ascribed to businesses or their research labs (Tetzeli, 1994). Neither of these developments assured television planners a broad and expanding field of home viewers to be tapped on-line.

Given uncertainty as to the potential, local stations cannot be expected to spend quickly and heavily on computer links with consumers. Indeed, few U.S. businesses have made such moves, according to one study ("Not on the Net?", 1995) which found only 34 percent of companies corresponding on-line with customers and only 14 percent reaching out on-line to potential customers.

On the other hand, even many people who do not own home computers can climb aboard the Internet at local public libraries, 21 percent of which were reported almost two years ago to have attained Internet access (St. Lifer, 1994). Meanwhile, the overall commercial outlook for expanded Internet use is spawning enterprises set up specifically to monitor, analyze and encourage on-line traffic. The aforementioned Nielsen Media Research, famous for TV ratings, has bought into a firm which audits use of the World Wide Web--a sign that just as TV leans on audience numbers, Web advertisers may begin to do so soon (Nash, 1995). Another company surveying travelers who use the Internet reported that three out of four already use it to help plan their trips (Vis, 1995).

That latter survey was conducted on-line, an example of the increasing use of the Internet to *study* use of the Internet. For example, a magazine seeking the views of experts on the security of on-line communications conducted its poll on-line (Anthes, 1994).

A similar research method--an on-line survey asking television news managers to provide on-line answers about their on-line activities--was selected for the current study. An advantage was that in light of anecdotal evidence that some stations vigorously promoted computer links to viewers, a strong infrastructure for participation seemed possible.

Embedded in this was a disadvantage: Attempts to generalize from the survey findings to industry-wide E-mail/Internet practices probably would be compromised by participation bias (Walsh, 1992). This would stem from the nature of the field: Stations with avowed interest in on-line exchanges with viewers.

But the principal purpose here was to monitor follow-through on prior claims; and at the very least, in this context and this target field, a computer survey was not likely to go *unnoticed.*

A short survey was designed. The short format was chosen because significant methodology experience (Dillman, 1978; Yammarino, 1991) suggests that longer surveys depress response rates. The respectable (for news organizations) 45 percent response to the 1995 precursor to this study[1] supported that thesis.

To news managers who in 1995 had reported E-mail/Internet plans, this year's survey would pose these major questions:

*Is your station accessible on the World Wide Web? On E-mail?
*How many visits ("hits") does your Web site receive weekly?
*How many E-mail messages do you receive weekly?
*Do you solicit viewers' news tips? How successfully?
*How many tips do you receive monthly via computer links?
*How important are these tips to your news process?
*How often do they pay off in finished news products?
*For comparison: How many tips do you receive by telephone,
how important are they, and how often do they pay off?

Arriving at a final census of stations to be surveyed did not prove as simple as it first appeared. The 1995 study targeting 650 U.S. television stations yielded 291 respondents (45%), of which 210 (72.1%) reported current or planned E-mail/Internet paths to viewers. This latter group could well have comprised the follow-up field--except that the earlier study granted anonymity, and some of the 210 stations chose not to volunteer their call letters when responding **(Fig. 1)**.

A total of 172 did provide call letters, and efforts to find their Internet "locations" now began. Several weeks of Web searching and phone calls to stations produced a list of 110 with reported computer addresses.

However, attempts to verify these addresses weeded out 15 stations to which E-mail messages were sent but were electronically returned undelivered, and which did not respond to telephone follow-ups. The remaining and final survey field: 95 stations with verified computer addresses.

In January and early February 1996, surveys directed to the attention of news executives were E-mailed to these 95 stations. By the Feb. 29 reply deadline, 29 had responded via E-mail. For the record, and owing perhaps as much to news organizations' attitudes toward surveys as to the form of delivery, that amounted to a 30.5 percent on-line response to an on-line survey.

During March, another 35 newsrooms answered the questionnaire when the author and a graduate assistant telephoned them to pose the questions personally. The final total: 64 respondents, a rate of 67.3 percent.

These responses spanned all time zones and included three stations in the top ten markets[2]; four in market sizes 11-20; two in markets 21-30; three in markets 31-40, and four in markets 41-50. Fifteen stations were in markets 51-100; the remaining 33 were distributed through markets 101-172.

RESULTS

Of the 64 respondents , 63 (98.4%)--the lone exception being a New York station which replied only to portions of the questionnaire--acknowledged being accessible by *E-mail*. The number of messages received weekly by E-mail **(Table 1)** vary widely: Eight stations (12.6%) reported receiving more than 100 apiece every week; 35 stations ranged from 11 to 100 in messages received, and ten stations (15.8%) said they receive 10 messages or fewer each week.

In short, the distribution of E-mail receipt rates was fairly uniform across the field, but with a few stations reporting very heavy message volume and a few barely active.

The pattern of *World Wide Web* returns was far different, possibly reflecting the relative complexity of Web-site construction by stations many of which were not hiring expert help. First, only 42 of the 64 responding stations (65.6%) reported having established such Internet sites. Of these, 18 (42.8%) reported receiving more than 100 weekly "hits," or registered visits by 'net users.

But almost as many--17 (40.4%)--answered that they "don't know" how many people check in weekly on the station sites. Web traffic to the remaining seven stations ranged from a handful of hits weekly to as many as 100.

Besides Web and E-mail involvement, eight of the 64 stations (12.5%) reported using other computer-based connections to viewers, principally the so-called BBS, or bulletin board, accessible via the Internet.

Not all messages through these computer routes come from viewers; government agencies and public-relations practitioners increasingly place announcements on-line. However, attempting to broaden this "information subsidy" (Berkowitz, 1990), some stations invite viewers to give them feedback including tips, posting on-screen their phone or address information. Asked whether they solicit news tips from the public through such on-air *promotions* or by other means, 49 of the 64 responding stations (76.5%) replied that they do so.

The success of such promotion campaigns has been spotty: Six of the 49 promoting stations (12.1%) reported "extremely" successful news-tip solicitation; 10 stations (20.4%) said they had been "quite" successful; but 29 (59.1%) said their on-air appeals for news ideas had paid off only "somewhat".

Still, irrespective of promotion, all of the 64 respondents reported *receiving* news tips from viewers--at least by phone. Fewer--57 stations (89%)--said computer links are delivering tips.

A wide disparity appeared between the *numbers of tips* received via phone versus computer routes **(Table 2).** Only six (10.5%) of the 57 stations reporting computer-delivered tips said they get more than 20 tips a month.
By contrast, 46 (71.8%) of the 64 stations receiving telephone tips take in more than 20 a month.

At the low end of the scale, 25 (43.8%) of the stations receiving news tips via computer said they get five or fewer per month. Another 17 (29.8%) get only six to 10 monthly. Telephone tips come in at a much higher rate, with only four stations reporting five or fewer per month.

Stations' *evaluation* of the news leads they receive via computer links or telephone **(Table 3)** follow a fairly comparable pattern. First, as to how *important* they perceive the tips to be, only seven (12.1%) of stations receiving them from modem-equipped viewers call those messages "extremely" important, and a sizable fraction, 17 (29.8%) places computer tips at the bottom of the scale as "unimportant."

The larger total field of 64 respondents seems much more enthusiastic about telephone tips: 35 stations (54.6%) said phone tips are extremely important, and only four (6.2%) find them unimportant.

When the survey asks how often each type of message *pays off in news,* telephone traffic retains its wide lead over computer-delivered messages. Six stations (10.5%) among those receiving computer tips said they lead or contribute to finished news "very often," while 27 stations (42.1% of respondents) found the phone tips very often productive.

Conversely, 25 (43.8%) of the stations receiving computer tips found them "not often" paying off in news, but only five (7.8%) of the field of 64 telephone-rich newsrooms characterized phone tips as not often productive.

This high approval of telephone paths from viewers over computer links proved statistically significant. The rated *importance* of phone tips over computer tips is significant at a level of $p=<.000$ ($x^2=31.52$). The degree to which phone tips *pay off in news* over and above computer tips is significant at a level of $p=<.000$ ($x^2=34.76$).

One survey question struck an emotional tone in an effort to ascertain degrees of executive commitment: How much would you *miss* your new computer links if they suddenly were abolished (i.e., if your company cut off support)? Responses indicated strong attachment by many news managers but lukewarm sentiment among many others. More than half, 34 (53.1%), said they would miss these services "a lot." But 19 (29.6%) said they would miss the links only "somewhat," while 10 (15.6%) said "not at all."

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to assess "follow-through" by news departments in implementing computer links to viewers, based on the stated intentions of 210 TV stations in the 1995 study. In that respect, the quest for a final survey field was a suggestive finding in itself.

To recap: After anonymous 1995 responses were discarded, 172 known stations were left; after a network search and telephone probes for Internet addresses, 110 stations remained on the list; and finally, apparent technical inability to receive messages removed another 15, leaving 95 accessible to follow-up.

Even allowing for imperfect search procedures and fleeting technical anomalies which might have blocked our inquiries, this sharp falloff--to fewer than half of the original computer-inclined respondents--is noteworthy. It suggests that many stations with "plan to" computer-link intentions early in 1995 may not have advanced beyond that status in the year since.

Of the final 64 newsrooms, virtually all are on E-mail, three-fourths report promoting their interest in viewer news tips, and half said they now take in more than five tips a month over computer lines. This is a low number, given the promotion, and may reflect low modem penetration into households. On this point, however, the words of news managers help provide perspective:

*An assistant news director in a top-forty Midwestern market said the trend is upward: "More and more individuals are (talking to us) through the computer."

*From a top-thirty Western city: "E-mail has (affected stories) some; we get a few more stories each month than we would have had."

*A top-twenty news director says his number of E-mail messages is between 26 and 50 a week "and increasing" and that many are useful ideas he passes to his consumer-reporting unit.

*From a small Southern station: "We get far more story suggestions on E-mail than by 'snail mail' (regular mail)."

To some news managers, quantity is less important than quality--and the quality of computer-delivered news tips can be high:

* "We get a higher payoff from E-mailed tips, at least as good as phone tips," said a Texas news director.

* "The messages are pretty detailed and from pretty educated people, and in that way they're pretty good," said a Florida news director.

That same executive complained, however, that some E-mailed tips are "too detailed, or wacky"--the latter word a reflection on some contributors which may bear investigation--and that they thus are time-consuming to process and check out.

A Southeastern manager said his station's computer input comes from "mostly idle college students" and does not often contribute to the day's news. A station low in the top 100 markets has found computer links to be "basically a feedback tool," said the employee assigned to supervise them. An Alabama news executive said his station was "thinking of dumping" its Web page.

A news director just back from a session with audience consultants said it had focused on viewer feedback, but that he was skeptical: "I have to balance out having a job to do--getting news on the air each day--with being 'customer-oriented.' If people write in and send us messages, who has time to go through it? Who has time to read it? I just don't have the resources. I have to find out and determine what the benefit is for me."

Respondents frequently voiced caution based on such a mixed reading of potential benefits. For many, the most obvious return on Web sites and E-mail for viewers is promotional--not in the ability to solicit computerized news tips but in showcasing information on anchors and special features while appearing technologically up-to-date. This echoed earlier results (Upshaw, 1996, Table 2) in which "promote station image" ranked just behind "get news tips" as a purpose of establishing E-mail outreach.

The promotion emphasis shows through the new survey findings in two ways: First, a number of stations report having assigned computer-link responsibilities not to news departments but to program directors, operations managers or others for whom news may be secondary to broader station goals. (One Midwestern marketing director did concede that 90 percent of his station's burgeoning E-mail traffic relates to news.)

Second, even some newsworkers frame the value of computer links to viewers in terms of stations' broad community image. The videographer-cum-computer specialist at a large California station said of his on-line system: "It presents the public with the idea that they can help us out and we in turn are listening to the community instead of just doing what we want to do."

Said a news director in the Northwest: "I think (computer contact with viewers) has more sales possibilities, so I'm trying to get our sales people involved." He and others are searching for strategies by which advertisers can be attracted to the new computer contact points with audiences.

The study indicates that local TV efforts to engage viewers in conversations and solicit their news input continue on many levels and across technologies old and new. A local BBS in a Southern town brings one station 25 messages a day. One station fosters computer-based "chat room" dialogue on local issues nightly. Others solicit news tips from commuters who have cellular phones.

Cultivation of tips from viewers via computer link is only part of this patchwork of experiments. For the 64 surveyed stations, progress on such links in the past year has been mostly slow and uneven. Clearly, enthusiasm for the links is mostly tepid; the telephone remains the dominant conduit of tips.

Few managers have been able to justify investing much time or money in an Internet presence. Some simply may have weighed their priorities and decided to put off greater dialogue with viewers. One psychological study (Wicker, 1994) found business executives avoiding negative possibilities by deferring positive possibilities. On this pattern, news directors could argue for avoiding risks (of squandering time that should go into news coverage, or of wasting precious funds) by postponing the prospective fruits of computer links.

Exceptional is the Texas TV sales manager who reports that from his station's Web page--established primarily for sales purposes--"the I-team gets a ton of stories."

He said many people even read the page, which includes news scripts, "as a substitute for watching the news." This same manager agrees that evaluations of computer contact with the local TV audience vary widely, but noted: "The ones who think it's important think it's absolutely vital--part of the next generation."

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

That latter comment underscores why research should continue to monitor the adoption--or rejection--of computer links to viewers by television stations: The general viability of such links has not yet been determined. In addition, research should move past newsrooms to study directly the audience's interest and participation in computer-borne input to the local news process.

To the extent modem-equipped viewers can be identified--and many Web sites can do this, as eager market researchers will attest--their news values and demographic characteristics should be mapped. Viewers now contribute to news routinely, but mainly by telephone and other conventional means; newer technologies may engage a very different pool of potential "tipsters" with so far unpredictable effects on reporting.

Also worthwhile would be further attitudinal research among television newsworkers and their managers. All face demands to make their products ever more user-friendly and cost-effective (and, some would argue, less meaningful and significant as journalism). These business-driven demands already bring amateur video into newscasts, opinion polls onto the air live, and viewer hot-lines onto assignment desks. Contributions from viewers and other outside nonprofessionals have become a factor of production for some stations.

Computer links and their potential effects only complicate an already roiling industry picture. With professional preservation at stake, it has been a journalistic creed to resist most lay efforts to influence news. But under pressure from hypercommercial trends documented by McManus (1994), Underwood (1993) and critics in the daily press, broadcast managers seek to cement their audience appeal by almost any means necessary. Whether they want useful news tips or simply hope to hold viewer attention through more involvement with stations deserves research.

Whatever the motives behind them, television's newer outreach methods could play a role in the redefinition of TV news. If so, scholars would do well to anticipate its nature and impact.

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Figure 1
Pursuing TV Stations on the Internet (and via Telephone)

Stations using/planning computer links to viewers (1995)	210
Volunteering call letters (1995)	172
Identified as having Web/E-mail addresses (1996)	110
Indicating receipt of survey via E-mail (1996)	95
Responding to survey via E-mail (1996)	29
Responding to telephone follow-up (1996)	35

Table 1
Stations' Weekly Tally of Viewer "Hits" or Messages

Number per week	*World Wide Web "hits"* (n=42)	*E-mail messages* (n=63)
More than 100	18	8
51-100	1	12
26-50	2	14
11-25	2	9
0-10	2	10
Don't know	17	10

Table 2
Stations' Monthly Total of News Tips Received

Tips per month	*Via computer links (n=57)*	*Via telephone (n=64)*
More than 20	6	46
16-20	5	4
11-15	4	5
6-10	17	5
Five or fewer	25	4

Table 3
Stations' Evaluation of News Tips Received

How important are the tips?			How often do they pay off in news?		
	Computer (n=57)	*Phone (n=64)*		*Computer (n=57)*	*Phone (n=64)*
Extremely	7	35	Very often	6	27
Quite	15	18	Somewhat	11	25
Slightly	18	7	Less often	15	7
Unimportant	17	4	Not often	25	5

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[1] The 1995 questionnaire was confined to one page--sent by regular mail--and was headed "Minute-Thirty Survey". This time reference, used daily in TV newsrooms in referring to the length of the typical news "package", was intended to emphasize to busy executives the user-friendly brevity of the survey.

[2] Based on listings in *Broadcasting & Cable Yearbook 1995*, vol. 1. New Providence, N.J.: R.R. Bowker. C135-218.

QUANTITATIVE TELEVISION COVERAGE OF WOMEN'S ATHLETICS: ESPN SPORTSCENTER AND CNN SPORTS TONIGHT

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QUANTITATIVE TELEVISION COVERAGE OF WOMEN'S ATHLETICS: ESPN SPORTSCENTER AND CNN SPORTS TONIGHT

The United States Department of Education designed Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments to the Civil Rights Act to increase the participation of and funding for women in athletics. Title IX states that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" (Parkhouse & Lapin, 1980, p. 17). Title IX recognizes that athletic endeavors are an integral part of an institution's educational program and requires institutions to report periodically on their progress toward gender equity.

Since Title IX was adopted, the number of girls participating in high school sports is up from 300,000 to more than two million (Himmelberg, 1992). However, media coverage of female sporting events has not expanded at the same rate. Women are underrepresented in print and broadcast media (Himmelberg, 1992). Magazines, newspapers, and television rarely cover female athletes and teams and females in typically "masculine" sports like shot putting get the least coverage of all (Kane, 1989).

To date, no study has addressed the coverage of women's sports events and/or female athletes on nightly national sports broadcasts to see if the phenomenon holds true in that setting. This study will examine the amount of coverage of women's athletics by the nation's two nightly cable sports news and highlights programs (ESPN _SportsCenter_ and CNN _Sports_

Tonight). Because the sports journalists working for ESPN and CNN hold jobs to which it may be assumed many local sports reporters and anchors aspire, the latter group is likely to mimic the methods that the former group employs. Therefore, exploring the two national sportscasts has implications for the audiences of those programs and for viewers who watch sportscasts produced on the local level. The degree to which sportscasters cover female athletics helps mold society's view of female athletes and women in general.

Duncan and Messner's (1994) study of 126 local newscasts which aired during three two-week periods in the Los Angeles market revealed that women athletes and sports are underrepresented on local TV news. Of the sportscasts under study, 70 percent contained no coverage of women's sports at all. A scant five percent of the time devoted to sports referred to female athletes or teams, leading the researchers to conclude that "if an event is not reported, in the minds of most people, it simply did not happen" (Duncan & Messner, 1994, p. 24.)

Most of the time (29 of 39 minutes) that was devoted to reporting on female athletes appeared on expanded-format Sunday sports programs. Rather than focusing on serious athletic accomplishment, the stories about women and sports tended to center around marginal but visually entertaining sports or could be characterized as gag features (i.e., a report about nuns playing bikini-clad women in a celebrity volleyball game). Additionally, stories about female athletes were much more likely to occur in March or July than in November, when high school, college, and professional football were in full swing. Because there are few female sports leagues, Duncan and Messner were not surprised to find more overall coverage of men's events. Men's professional team sports dominated the coverage, although numerous women's events (primarily golf and tennis tournaments) did occur during the sample weeks.

Reports on women's events were likely to consist of descriptions of games or events with no attendant interviews. Taped comments used as part of the sports report almost always came from male coaches or athletes. Duncan and Messner (1994) commented that the voices of female athletes and coaches are almost never allowed to break the constant baritone of the voices of male sportscasters and the men they interview.

Underreporting in sports

Other researchers have examined the relative dearth of coverage of women's athletics by various media. It was not until the 1960s that women's sports were first covered by television. In that decade, ABC's Wide World of Sports began to do some features on female athletes and the 1960 Olympic Games marked the first time women's events were televised into America's homes (Creedon, 1994b). The coverage of female sports that has come since then has been sporadic and markedly different than the coverage afforded men's events. The phenomenon is not peculiar to the United States. Alexander (1994) found that British television does not treat male and female sport with equal importance. In her study, men's events were likely to be televised live and in their entirety. When women's events were covered, they were more likely to be edited and shown at a later time. Alexander found that British television coverage favored male athletes at both the 1991 World Championships and 1992 Olympic Games. Coverage of women was limited to British athletes who were carrying their nation's banner, while coverage of men's events was more global in nature.

The variance in coverage leads to a vicious cycle. Women athletes do not receive equal coverage because they are not as "high-profile" as their male counterparts. As a result, female athletes find it more difficult to attract sponsors who wish to be identified with athletes possessing a high degree of name recognition. Because of the lack of sponsorship dollars, female athletes miss out on training opportunities which could heighten their skills and lead to championship performances which would result in greater name recognition. This phenomenon parallels Noelle-Neumann's (1973) spiral of silence.

The spiral of silence theory argues that society threatens those who deviate from the consensus with isolation and exclusion. The fear of isolation causes people to continually check which opinions and *modes of behavior* are acceptable. When one's opinion or action is assessed as unacceptable, the person ceases to express the opinion or engage in the action. In such a situation, women who see their involvement in sports as socially taboo will cease playing the sport. This would apply to sports in general and “masculine” sports in particular.

Noelle-Neumann's theory does account for outspoken proponents of an opinion who will adhere to and express that opinion regardless of what others think. For them, the spiral of silence does not apply because they are vocal about their opinions even though they are different from the consensus. Such might be the case with certain female athletes, who choose to engage in the athletic activity of their choice despite possible negative social ramifications. However, the overall effect of the cycle is that greater numbers of less intensely interested female athletes are discouraged from participating in sports, especially highly competitive contact sports like football and hockey. Because they do not participate in sports which attract large numbers of spectators and consistent media attention, the athletic accomplishments of many women remain hidden.

In a study of Sports Illustrated, Kane (1989) found that females in more "feminine" or socially acceptable sports such as tennis and golf received significantly more coverage than females who participated in socially unacceptable sports like basketball or softball. She found that the pattern was just as evident eight years after the passage of Title IX as it was before. Study after study has shown that female athletes are so underrepresented in the media that they are rendered almost absent from the sports world (Kane, 1989).

Hilliard (1984) examined sports-specific and general news magazines to gauge their coverage of female athletes. Magazines like Sports Illustrated, Sport, World Tennis, Time, Newsweek, and People took a common approach. There was, not surprisingly, much more coverage of male than female athletes. In addition, article titles typically referred to men, even when the article included coverage of athletes of both genders. Both photographs and text about men appeared first.

Other researchers uncovered similar patterns. Bryant (1980) found that coverage of women athletes in two major metropolitan papers in Denver paled in comparison to coverage of males in sports. This phenomenon was evident in the column inches of space devoted to women's and men's athletics, the placement of the stories written, and the number of photographs used. No newspaper edition from the two weeks of study included an article on female athletics on the front page of the sports section, regardless of the gender of the writer. Bryant's look at national sports magazines revealed a similar pattern, causing him to conclude that the impact of Title IX had yet to reach the print media and that readers were rarely provided with a fair view of women in sports.

Messner's (1992) study of four of the top-selling newspapers in the United States showed a 23 to one ratio of sports stories about men to those about women. Women's stories were generally shorter, less likely to be accompanied by a photo, and less likely to be on the front page. Messner concluded that sports news means men's sports news and that sport is a key component to our current gender order. "A key to whether or not increasing female athleticism will amount to a real challenge to sport's role in a system of masculine domination is whether and how the media cover girls' and women's sport" (Messner, 1992, p. 164).

Boutilier and SanGiovanni's (1983) content analysis of the Silver Anniversary Issue of Sports Illustrated showed that of the 119 photographs of athletes, 105 were of men only. The range of sports depicted in the photographs was twice as large for men as for women, and all of the women's sports depicted were individual rather than team sports. Further, in nearly 60 percent of the photos, sportswomen were shown in passive, non-athletic poses that captured their personality, style, and charm while a greater number of photographs of men showed their active athleticism. Sports media reflect, shape, and may even help create attitudes and values about what type of sports participation is appropriate and acceptable for females. Because female sporting events and female athletes are "grossly underreported" (Kane, 1989, p. 59), readers and viewers come away with the impression that few women participate in sports, and that women who do participate in athletics are involved in individual, not team sports.

Alexander (1994) concluded that television ignores women's team sports, reinforcing stereotypes that suggest that female athletes should be glamorous and graceful and should not participate in sports that involve contact or which cause them to sweat. According to Alexander, this portrayal contributes to a social system that forces women to conform to social sanctions that shape their participation in sports. Her findings were similar in a study of British print media, the reporting system of which, like television, was comprised almost totally of males. The message is that female sport is of little interest and female athletes are second rate. This can affect women contemplating or actually participating in athletics and how they view themselves and sport. Few people will choose to become involved in an activity that receives little if any social sanction and few media outlets will regularly cover events which are thought to be outside the mainstream.

Who does the reporting?

Most newspaper sports bylines are by men, although women are generally believed to have superior verbal skills and so should have an advantage in sports writing. This advantage has not resulted in large numbers of females entering the sports writing profession, suggesting that "regardless of psychobiological 'advantages' many important social patterns are determined by access to opportunities" (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983, p. 55). Editors and reporters tend to stick to topics with which they are familiar (Cramer, 1994) and most sports journalists are not very familiar with women's athletics. Even when the sports journalist is a woman, coverage is sometimes based on how things have been done in the past. Some female journalists "do it the way the guys do," although others seek out good female stories and pursue them (Cooper-Chen, 1994).

Sports viewership

One argument made in support of a sports reporting system made up primarily of male writers and reporters is that the audience is mostly male and wants to get its information from other men. Numerically and proportionately more males than females watch televised sports (Gantz & Wenner, 1991), but as with participation, the numbers of males and females watching sports are not grossly disparate. To suggest that only men watch sports is simply erroneous.

Although sports is the only program type that attracts more men that women, 50 percent or more of the women in various industrialized countries report that they watch sports regularly (Cooper-Chen, 1994). According to a national survey of nearly 2400 people conducted in 1993, women comprise more than 40 percent of the viewers of games from Major League Baseball, The National Basketball Association, and the National Football League. The number of female viewers for professional boxing is nearly as high (Arrington, 1995). Many women still gravitate toward viewing individual sports that emphasize graceful movement and that involve little body contact, like swimming, diving, gymnastics, and ice skating. Figure skating remains the most popular spectator sport for women. The Ladies' Technical Program portion of the 1994 Winter Olympics figure skating competition was the fourth most-watched event in U. S. television history. CBS recorded a whopping 48.5 share, as nearly half of the television sets in use were tuned to the competition (Grabarek, 1995). While there were undoubtedly men in the viewing audience, women comprise a higher percentage of the viewership for ice skating. ABC's 1992 Winter Olympic telecasts from Calgary marked what is believed to be the first time in television history that women made up the majority of the audience for a network sports telecast or series (Burnett, Menon, & Smart, 1993).

Female viewership of sports is not confined to game telecasts. Women comprise a notable portion of the audiences for the two programs under study here. Women make up 44 percent of the audience for CNN Sports Tonight (A. Mitchell, CNN Public Relations, personal communication, November 15, 1995), and 22 percent of the weeknight viewers of ESPN's SportsCenter are women. The number of female viewers of the ESPN program rises to 25 percent on Sunday nights (S. Jones, ESPN Public Relations, personal communication, November 17, 1995). Table One presents the number of weeknight viewers age 18 and above for each program.

Table 1. Breakdown of Viewers by Gender

	Male viewers	Female viewers	Percent Female
Sports Tonight	299,000	235,000	44%
SportsCenter	636,000	182,000	22%

The literature cited herein suggests that many women are interested in sports as participants and spectators, and led to the following hypotheses. While there is no clear consensus in the literature regarding the presence of female journalists and its effect on increased coverage of women, it follows intuitively that such would be the case; the more female journalists, the greater the coverage of female athletics.

H1. Of the two programs under study, the one utilizing the greatest proportion of female staffers will devote a greater amount of overall air time to stories about women's sports.

Previous research has uniformly found that women's team sports are rarely covered; those women's events that do receive media attention are those that reinforce the stereotype of non-aggressive, prim and proper females. The findings of this study are expected to mirror those from past research.

H2. Coverage of women's athletics will emphasize individual sports like golf and tennis, with relatively little time devoted to team sports.

Earlier research has indicated that the production quality of women's events is lower than for men's events. Further, Duncan and Messner (1994) found that far fewer stories about women contained visuals compared to the number of stories about men accompanied by video, though the proportion was roughly equal.

H3. Coverage of men's events will exhibit greater production value (use of video) than will coverage of women's events.

Past research has not addressed the placement of female stories in relation to male stories in television sports reporting. Other findings regarding the treatment of stories about males and females, respectively, lead logically to this hypothesis.

H4. When a men's and women's event in the same sport are covered, the male report will precede the female report.

It is expected that in addition to there being numerically fewer stories about female athletes than those about males, the proportion of women's stories containing taped comments from participants or observers will be lower as well. This would be consistent with Duncan and Messner's (1994) findings.

H5. Coverage of men's events will entail greater use of taped comments from participants or observers.

In addition to fewer women's stories containing comments, those stories that contain interview snippets will contain a numerically and proportionately greater number of comments from males.

H6. Taped comments will come disproportionately from male participants or observers.

METHOD

The method for this study called for collecting a sample of sportscasts from the two national cable sports news shows, ESPN's SportsCenter and CNN's Sports Tonight. The sports shows on the two cable networks were recorded during a period spanning four weeks from August 28 to September 24, 1995. The specific time period was chosen so as to encompass an event thought likely to gain coverage for male and female athletes alike, the U. S. Open Tennis Championships. A three-level recording scheme with video cassette recorders at two locations programmed to record the shows of interest was used.

The study resulted in the compilation of programming from 24 broadcast dates, six days for each of the four target weeks. During the fall of the year, ESPN coverage of college football often delays the start of SportsCenter by an hour or more and sometimes pre-empts the program, hence, Saturday nights were not included in the study. Also, ESPN coverage of double-header Major League Baseball pre-empted the Wednesday night edition of SportsCenter during each of the four target weeks, leaving only Sports Tonight programs representing that day of the week as part of the sample. CNN's program lasts 30 minutes during the week and an hour on Sundays, while ESPN's program is scheduled for an hour each evening.

Once all data were collected, the content was coded by the author. The unit of analysis was the story. Coding included an indication of the cable network airing the story, the broadcast date, the story length, and the slug (title). Additionally, coding indicated the level of competition, whether professional, college, olympic, non-olympic amateur, or other. If more than one level of competition was reported on within a particular story, that was included in the "other" category. The sport represented was coded as well. Stories including highlights from a number of different sports were coded into the "other" category.

Coding within the presentation category indicated whether the story was an anchor reader with no supporting graphics or tape. Other story categories were voice-over (anchor narration) tape, voice-over graphics, graphics over music, voice-over/sound on tape, sound on tape with no voice-over, reporter package, live interview involving a studio anchor and a source at another site or on set, a live remote including a package or interview, or a report from an analyst or reporter who was on the set. The gender of the anchor delivering the story was coded, as was the gender of any reporter or on-camera source (coach, player, fan, celebrity, sports official or administrator, member of the legal system, family member, or politician).

Any taped comments from sources were timed to indicate the relative time devoted to interviews with male or female participants or officials. Coding also indicated if the event included only male, only female, or mixed-gender participation. The placement of the story within the program was also coded to determine if women's stories were relegated to positions following those about males participating in the same sport. Coding indicated the placement of stories within program blocks. A block is defined as those stories slotted between any two commercial breaks or between the show open or close and a commercial.

In order to check intercoder reliability, slips of paper containing the broadcast dates were placed in a container and drawn out at random to determine the programs to be checked, creating a stratified sample of four CNN programs, one for each week of the study. All broadcast dates were again placed in the container and the two dates comprising the ESPN sample were drawn. This was done to create a sample which represented the two programs equally, two hours for each, accounting for the difference in program length between SportsCenter and Sports Tonight. The sample produced 1,407 item comparisons with disagreement between the author and a trained graduate student on but 49 items for an intercoder agreement rate of 96.5 percent. The data were subjected to either chi-square or analysis of variance and post hoc testing using SAS (1989).

RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the hypotheses tests and related post hoc analyses. Hypothesis One stated that the program utilizing the greatest proportion of female anchors, reporters, producers, and production assistants would devote more stories and air time to coverage of women's athletics. Each program used one female anchor and four male anchors during the study. ESPN's female anchor appeared more frequently, co-anchoring seven of the 20 SportsCenter programs in the sample. The female anchor on CNN appeared on each of the Friday night installments of Sports Tonight, a total of four of the 24 CNN programs under study. ESPN also made far greater use of female reporters and analysts. Females appeared in this capacity 22 times on ESPN, while only three CNN stories were filed by a female reporter. CNN used no comments from female analysts. Part of the disparity can be explained by the greater amount of SportsCenter program time in the sample and part can be attributed to ESPN's greater use of reporters of both genders. Except for Sundays, when both SportsCenter and Sports Tonight last one hour, ESPN had twice as much air time to fill and used stories filed by reporters to flesh out its programs. ESPN used male anchors and analysts 60 times, while CNN used male reporters on but 21 occasions.

However, the difference in the use of female reporters/analysts by the two programs is not fully explained away by ESPN's need to fill more air time. The ratio of male reporters on the two programs was 3.2 to one; it rose to seven to one for female reporters. Hence, ESPN showed a greater on-air female presence than CNN did. Additionally, SportsCenter used a far greater number of Associate Producers and Production Assistants and a higher percentage of them were female. Approximately 32 percent of ESPN personnel making content decisions on some level were women. A smaller percentage (26%) of CNN's production staff was female. One would therefore expect ESPN to air more stories on women's athletics but the findings led to rejection of the research hypothesis. Indeed, the relationship was opposite of what was predicted.

CNN, with 40 percent of the sample air time, aired 36 female stories; ESPN, with 60 percent of the air time, ran 29 reports about women's athletics. Though CNN ran numerically and proportionately more female stories, both programs devoted relatively little time to female sports. Combined, the two programs aired 1,252 stories about males (94.6 percent) and only 65 about females (4.9 percent). An additional six stories reported on both men and women. The bulk of the women's stories aired during the first two weeks of the sample. During the second two weeks, following completion of the U. S. Open, the programs aired a combined 669 stories, 12 of which (1.8 percent) were about women. Five broadcast dates contained but one female story each, five others contained no reports on women's sports.

One-way analysis of variance showed a significant difference in the length of stories $F(3, 1313) = 8.71$, $\underline{p} < .0001$. There was a significant difference in story length across programs $F(1, 1313) = 14.90$, $\underline{p} = .0001$ and a significant difference in the length of male and female stories $F(1, 1313) = 10.51$, $\underline{p} = .0012$. Follow-up analysis by Student-Newman-Keuls test showed ESPN (M = 64.04 sec.) ran significantly longer stories than CNN (M = 53.11 sec.). SNK also showed that stories about male athletes on the two programs (M = 60.53 sec.) were significantly longer than those about female athletes (M = 38.12 sec). There was no significant interaction between program and gender which affected length. Both ESPN and CNN ran longer male stories and the programs devoted an almost identical amount of time to reports on female athletics.

Table 2. Length of Stories by Gender

	Male stories	Avg. length	Female stories	Avg. length
CNN	520	54.14 sec.	36	38.14 sec.
ESPN	732	65.06 sec.	29	38.10 sec.

Across the two programs, stories ranged in length from three seconds to 343 seconds. The longest story about women's athletics lasted 174 seconds. Fifty one male stories exceeded this length. Twenty six of the women's stories (49 percent) ran 20 seconds or less. Anchors on both programs needed 20 seconds or less to report on 308 men's stories (24.5 percent). All but one female story that exceeded 30 seconds in length reported on the U. S. Open. The other was a report on the attempted kidnapping of former Tampa Bay Buccaneers team owner Gay Culverhouse.

There was no appreciable difference between the two programs in the amount of time devoted to story content per broadcast segment. The sample included 13.5 hours of CNN programming, or 27 segments of 30 minutes duration. The total for ESPN was 20 hours, or 40 segments lasting 30 minutes each. CNN devoted an average of 20.67 minutes to content per 30 minutes of air time. ESPN's "sportshole" was 19.13 minutes per 30 minutes of air time. Time devoted to commercials, teases, sponsor billboards, promos, and anchor chit-chat was subtracted to arrive at these averages. The research hypothesis was rejected as the program with fewer female staffers actually aired more female stories.

Emphasis on individual women's sports over team events

Hypothesis Two, which stated that coverage of female athletics would emphasize individual sports with relatively little time devoted to women's team sports, was accepted. Only three of the 65 stories about women aired by the two programs covered team sports. As mentioned earlier, one report involved the female former owner of a professional football team. Each program also covered the resignation of UCLA's women's basketball coach. Forty nine stories covered females participating in the U. S. Open

Tennis Championships and 12 were devoted to women's professional golf events. Only 12 of the stories about female athletes aired during the final two weeks of the sample, after the U. S. Open was complete. Table 3 shows that tennis and golf accounted for 95.4 percent of the coverage of female sports.

Table 3. Women's Stories by Sport

Sport	Frequency	Percent
Football	1	1.5
Basketball	2	3.1
Tennis	49	75.4
Golf	13	20.0

Post hoc analysis revealed that men were shown engaged in a greater variety of sports than were women. While females were the principal subject in stories involving four different sports (three in which women were actual participants), men were the primary subject in stories involving 12 sports. Men were also represented in a thirteenth category, stories utilizing highlights from a number of different sports. No story of this type showed women exclusively, though three included brief shots of women's tennis and so were coded in mixed-gender category.

Table 4. Men's Stories by Sport

Sport	Frequency	Percentage
Football	353	28.2
Baseball	625	49.8
Basketball	48	3.8

Hockey	33	2.6
Tennis	67	5.3
Golf	56	4.5
Auto racing	28	2.2
Track & field	2	0.2
Soccer	2	0.2
Boxing	17	1.4
Horse racing	1	0.1
Skating	1	0.1
Mixed	19	1.5

As Table 4 shows, the big three men's sports (football, baseball, and basketball) accounted for 81.8 percent of the total.

Production value

Hypothesis Three predicted that coverage of men's events would contain greater use of video than coverage of women's events. It was rejected as analysis of variance revealed no significant difference in the production value associated with female stories and male stories. Stories about female athletes were just as likely to contain video as were stories about males. However, only two female stories (three percent of the total) were assigned to a reporter or included comments from an analyst. The rest were read by the studio anchors. A higher proportion of male stories were "packaged" by a reporter or included analyst commentary, with 101 of the 1,252 male stories (8.1 percent) receiving this level of production attention.

Story placement

As predicted in Hypothesis Four, coverage of women centered on individual sports. Tennis and golf were the only sports which gained consistent coverage for female participants. However, male participants in both sports received more coverage than did females and the placement of men's stories in relation to those about women playing the same sport accorded greater importance to the men's event. Chi-square analysis ($x^2 = 10.63$, df = 1, $p = .001$) showed a distribution significantly different than what might be expected to occur by chance. The two programs aired 67 male tennis stories compared to 49 female tennis stories. The disparity was greater in golf, with stories on males out-numbering those about females by 56 to 13.

CNN aired 19 of its 26 female tennis stories in the first block of the show, compared to 16 stories about male tennis (out of a total of 31) which appeared in the first block. On one occasion, a story about a female was the second story in the CNN program. ESPN aired 22 men's tennis stories (out of 27) in block one, compared to 10 (of 23) female stories in that block. Monica Seles' first match at the U. S. Open warranted first-story placement on SportsCenter. Each program aired men's golf within the first two blocks on some of their broadcast dates. Women's golf made it's earliest appearance in block four of each program. Table 5 shows the placement of golf and tennis stories by gender. Hypothesis Four was retained.

Table 5. Placement of Golf & Tennis Stories by Gender

Block #	M. golf	F. golf	M. tennis	F. tennis
1	3	0	38	29

2	3	0	10	1
3	6	0	6	4
4	15	4	7	6
5	10	3	3	4
6	5	1	1	0
7	3	1	0	0
8	5	2	1	4
9	1	1	1	1
10	5	1	0	0
Total	56	13	67	49

"Play of the Day" and "Sunday Conversation" segments were not included in Table 8. Because of it's longer air time on weeknights, ESPN SportsCenter typically has more program blocks than CNN Sports Tonight.

Outside sources

Hypothesis Five stated that coverage of men's events would contain proportionately greater use of taped comments than would coverage of women's events. As was the case with the disparity in the overall number of stories devoted to women's athletics versus those devoted to men's sports, both ESPN and CNN relied heavily on male coaches, athletes, and officials for quotes. ESPN aired a total of 385 taped comments from male participants, officials, or observers during the four weeks of the study, while women spoke on camera a total of 15 times, a ratio of nearly 26 to one. The amount of time devoted to comments from men compared to those from women resulted in a ratio favoring men of more than 21 to one. However, due to the huge disparity in the number of stories, a slightly higher proportion of the reports on women's events contained taped comments. Thus, Hypothesis Five was not supported.

Hypothesis Six stated that stories containing interview snippets would include more comments from men than from women. It was retained. The disparity was most noticeable among coaches, with 103 comments coming from male coaches, none from female coaches. In that women's team sports were rarely covered, the lack of quotes from female coaches was not unexpected. Among athletes the number of quotes was 220 to 10. All 10 of the female quotes came from participants in the U. S. Open Tennis Championships, hence, no female athletes were quoted during the second two weeks of the study. Male officials spoke on camera 41 times, compared to one taped comment from a female official. The average length of the comments from male and female speakers in each category was not substantially different, though comments from female athletes were, on average, longer than those from male athletes. However, it should be noted that one or two lengthy comments skewed the average higher for women because of the small N. Table 6 presents comparisons within the categories of speakers quoted.

Table 6. ESPN - Quoted Sources

	# of comments	total time (sec.)	average length
m. coach	103	1365	13.3
f. coach	0	0	------
m. athlete	220	3014	13.7
f. athlete	10	208	20.8
m. official	41	518	12.6
f. official	1	06	------

m. fan	11	106	9.4
f. fan	1	13	------
m. total	385	5172	13.4
f. total	15	240	16.0

Totals also include comments from representatives of the legal profession and family members of athletes or coaches, but Ns in each gender group were too small for meaningful intra-category comparisons.

On CNN, female participants or observers were quoted only slightly more often in comparison to males. During the four weeks of the study, CNN aired 260 comments from males and 19 from females, a ratio of more than 15 to one. The amount of time devoted to male and female comments also yielded a ratio of more than 15 to one. As was the case on ESPN, CNN aired no comments from female coaches, and all of the comments from female athletes came during the first two weeks of the study. All were from players participating in the U. S. Open. CNN utilized no taped comments from female officials or fans. Table 7 presents comparisons within the categories of speakers.

Table 7. CNN - Quoted Sources

	# of comments	total time (sec.)	average length
m. coach	54	778	14.4
f. coach	0	0	------
m. athlete	169	2330	13.7
f. athlete	16	216	14.4
m. official	31	489	15.8
f. official	0	------	------
m. total	260	3690	14.1

f. total	19	229	14.3

Totals also include comments from representatives of the legal profession, fans, and family members of athletes or coaches, but Ns in each gender group were too small for meaningful intra-category comparisons.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Hypothesis One, which predicted that the program with the greater number of female staffers would cover female athletics more extensively, was not supported. Indeed, the opposite was true. CNN's Sports Tonight, the program with fewer female staffers and using its female anchor and reporters less frequently actually aired more stories about women's sports. Neither program, however, could be judged to have treated women's sports equitably. The national sports programs did not differ from the local stations in Duncan and Messner's (1994) study in that they devoted only about five percent of their stories to coverage of women's sports. In the final two weeks of the study, the percentage of stories devoted to female athletes and sports was less than two percent. Determining if a segment of the sample or the entire sample was more indicative of typical programming was beyond the scope of this study. However, in either case it appears that both programs devote an inordinately small number of their stories and very little of their air time to reports on female sports. Both staffs could easily restructure their programs to "make room" for more women's sports without seriously affecting coverage of men's events. By trimming the average men's story by only five seconds, each would have more than two minutes per broadcast for reports on women's events.

CNN aired numerically and proportionately more women's stories than ESPN, although CNN occupied only about two-thirds as much of the program time in the sample as its competitor. Still, each program devoted more than 93 percent of its stories to male sports. In addition, the average female story on each was significantly shorter than the average male story. Between them, the two programs aired but one in-depth feature on a female athlete during the sample period, while airing 99 features about male athletes or teams. The dearth of stories about women cannot be attributed to a lack of events to be covered, as Appendix A shows. Women were playing several sports on the college level during the time period under study. Numerous national and world championships were contested in other sports as well. At least two international events were held in Atlanta, Georgia, the city where CNN is headquartered.

Sports highlighted

Hypothesis Two, which predicted that most female stories would be about individual sports, was strongly supported. The stories about female sports were confined almost exclusively to tennis and golf. Each cable network aired but one story related to a women's team sport during the sample. CNN reported on the resignation of the UCLA women's basketball coach with a 30 second voice-over. ESPN covered the story with a three second mention incorporated in the anchor good-bye. The effect was to render women's team sports virtually invisible. The two programs showed women as players or coaches involved in but three sports: tennis, golf, and basketball. Four times as many men's sports were represented.

Production value

Hypothesis Three was not supported. There was no difference in the proportion of female and male stories which were accompanied by video. However, the percentage of female stories accompanied by video may have been artificially inflated by coverage of the U. S. Open. No women's golf stories included highlights. There was a marked difference in the number and proportion of stories assigned to a reporter or which included commentary from an analyst. Because more time and effort are required to produce reporter packages than stories in other presentation categories, it could be argued that male stories received greater production attention.

Story placement

Hypothesis Four was supported. As predicted, stories about males usually preceded those about females participating in the same sport. Only those women athletes participating in golf and tennis received more than passing attention and fell into this category. Although highlights of men's and women's action at the U. S. Open gained early story placement for athletes of each gender, the men's story typically preceded the women's story. On occasion, the men's and women's stories were separated by two or more program blocks. In one instance, the women's story was placed seven program blocks behind the men's story and was merely a graphic listing of the female winners. The men's story included extensive highlights and was the lead story in the program. There were three instances when the female tennis story came first and one even led the sportscast, but these were exceptions to the norm. Men's golf always preceded women's golf on both programs.

Use of sound bites

Hypothesis Five was not supported. There was no significant difference in the proportion of female and male stories accompanied by taped comments from participants or observers. Indeed, a greater percentage of female stories included sound bites. This can be attributed, at least in part, to the huge disparity in the overall number of stories about males compared to those about females, and to the number of female tennis stories which contained quotes.

Hypothesis Six was strongly supported. Men were much more likely to be quoted than women were. Because substantially more stories involved men, the vast majority of quotes came from male coaches, athletes, and officials. However, other speaker categories (fans, family members, legal representatives) which could have contained a more equitable mix of male and female speakers did not.

Summary

In nearly every measurable way, the two programs portrayed women's sports as less important than men's athletic competition. With the exception of coverage of the U. S. Open (and on some measures, even including coverage of the U. S. Open), men's sports were cast as more important than women's events. The number of stories, production emphasis and the use of interviews, and placement of a report in relation to others all painted men as the standard of sports success. By comparison, women were portrayed as something of an anomaly in sports. To attract more than token attention, women had to be involved in one of the biggest events of the year. Men merely needed to be playing in relatively meaningless regular-season competition. Hence, SportsCenter and Sports Tonight reinforce the idea of male supremacy in sports and send the message that female athletes are simply not as deserving of regular coverage.

The conclusion of this study, not surprisingly, is the same as that reached by Kane (1989) more than six years ago. We have not reached gender equality in sports coverage. Through Title IX, those seeking legislative answers to the disparity in athletic opportunities for men and women have made significant strides in promoting equality. However, this study shows that we must address media communication issues to affect further change in this area. Female athletic participation continues to be underrepresented and trivialized in the media, and the trivialization comes partly from the media's propensity to emphasize "feminized" women playing socially acceptable individual sports over those engaged in athletic competition against a team of opponents. Only those females who participate in individualized, non-contact sports are afforded more than passing media coverage. This effectively removes women's team sports from the media's agenda and reinforces the idea that women who play team sports are somehow "different."

How female athletes are depicted by the two national programs may influence sports anchors in local markets across the country. Local sportscasters may look at what SportsCenter and Sports Tonight cover and conclude that limited coverage of female athletics is the norm. The decision by ESPN to air more NCAA women's basketball games is a step in the right direction and should lead to more coverage of that sport on highlights programs. However, it is clear there is still much room for improvement. Women are interested in sports as participants and spectators. A pragmatic approach by the two cable networks necessitates a broader understanding of the viewing desires of that portion of the audience.

Both cable networks should strive for more equitable treatment of women in their late evening highlights/sports news programs. The gatekeepers who decide which stories are included should proactively pursue opportunities to present more coverage of female athletics. This may require more effort than is typically needed to cover men's professional and major college sports, which often entails little more than selecting the appropriate satellite coordinates and pushing the record button on a tape machine. Games selected for broadcast are easily edited for highlights. Even satellite feed services are limited in which highlights they can provide by which games are readily available. Increased event coverage of women's tennis, golf, and basketball has made it possible for sports programs to include more highlights of these events. However, this type of passive discovery of information will likely do little to change the story selection patterns of the programs in question. A decisive and aggressive platform to offer more gender-balanced coverage is needed. The mediated status quo only serves to reinforce decades of inequality in sports.

Limitations

The time period represented in this study was selected specifically to incorporate the U. S. Open Tennis Championships. This was done to address the concern that a non-stratified sample might yield almost no coverage of women's sports. However, the time period did limit the generalizability of the findings to other times of the year when different sports are being contested. Additionally, this study only tells us which stories were aired by the two programs. We can only infer the causes and effects of the disparity in treatment of male and female sports and athletes.

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APPENDIX A

List of selected sports events in which women competed during study period:

GOLF - LPGA tour events

August 31 - September 2/Springfield, Illinois
September 6 - September 8/Portland, Oregon
September 12 - September 15/Seattle, Washington
September 20 - September 22/Wales, England

TENNIS

August 26 - September 8/U. S. Open Championships/Flushing Meadow, New York

TRACK & FIELD

September 1 - September 3/8th Pan American Junior Track Championships/Santiago, Chile
September 3/IAAF Grand Prix Final/Monte Carlo, Monaco

MULTIPLE SPORT EVENTS

August 29 - September 3/World University Games/Fukoka, Japan
Sports contested by women included a full complement of track and field events, basketball, fencing, rythmic and artistic gymnastics, swimming, diving, tennis, volleyball, and judo.

OTHER SPORTS

August 24 - September 2/SAILING/European Championships/Cascais, Portugal
August 26, 27/WEIGHTLIFTING/Women's NACACI Championships/ Toronto, Canada
August 29 - September 4/ROLLER SKATING/9th U. S. Junior Olympic Championships/Fresno, California
September 1 -3/CANOE/KAYAK/Slalom Canoe/Kayak World Championships/ Nottingham, England
September 1 - 5/WHEELCHAIR SPORTS/World Weightlifting Championships/ Washington, D. C.
September 2 - 18/FIELD HOCKEY/1995 Champions Trophy/Buenos Aires, Argentina
September 5 - 9/DIVING/IXth FINA World Diving Cup/Atlanta, Georgia
September 6 - 17/SAILING/STAR World Championship/Laredo, Spain

APPENDIX A (cont.)

September 8 - 17/SAILING/European Championships/Sandown, Great Britain
September 9,10/WRESTLING/Women's World Championships/ Moscow, Russia
September 9 - 16/SAILING/European Championship/Balatonfuned, Hungary
September 11 - 17/WATER SKIING/World Water Ski Championships/ Roquebrune/Argent, France
September 18 - 24/WATER POLO/FINA World Cup/Atlanta, Georgia
September 19 - 24/GYMNASTICS/Rythmic World Championships/Vienna, Austria
September 21 - 24/MODERN PENTATHALON/Junior Women's World Championships/Usti, Czechoslovakia
September 24/CYCLING/World Cycling Championships/Bogota, Colombia

INTERCOLLEGIATE WOMEN'S SPORTS IN SEASON
VOLLEYBALL
GOLF
TENNIS
CROSS COUNTRY
SOCCER
FIELD HOCKEY

APPENDIX B

Summary statistics:

Program	# of stories	Percent
CNN	558	42.2
ESPN	765	57.8

*differences due to greater amount of ESPN program time in sample

Sport	# of stories	Percent
Football	354	26.8
Baseball	625	47.2
Basketball	50	3.8
Hockey	33	2.5
Tennis	120	9.1
Golf	69	5.2
Auto racing	28	2.1
Track & field	2	0.2
Soccer	2	0.2
Boxing	17	1.3
Horse racing	1	0.1
Mixed	21	1.6

Level	# of stories	Percent
Professional	1209	91.4
College	97	7.3
Olympic	1	0.1
Amateur	2	0.2
Other, mixed	14	1.1

Timing	# of stories	Percent
Upcoming	60	4.5
Complete/in prog.	949	71.7
Hard news	214	16.2
Feature	100	7.6

Presentation	# of stories	Percent
reader	94	7.1
vo/graphic	323	24.4
vo/tape	630	47.6
vo/sot	95	7.2
sot	35	2.6
package	115	8.7

remote	9	0.7
on set	2	0.2
music/graphic	20	1.5

Gender	# of stories	Percent
Male	1252	94.6
Female	65	4.9
Mixed	6	0.5

* Mixed indicates men and women competing against one another or stories which lumped male and female participation together.

Anchor	# of stories	Percent
Male	1155	87.3
Female	167	12.6
Mixed	1	0.1

*Mixed indicates one story, part of which was read by different anchors.

Radio-Television Journalism
Division

A Deeper Look at the "Superficiality" of Television News

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A Deeper Look at The "Superficiality" of Television News

This study examines 20 years (1971-1990) of television network news (ABC, CBS and NBC), analyzing length, number and topic of news items in order to identify changes over time, particularly as they relate to criticism of TV news.

Background

Television has been blamed for ills ranging from declining reading and standardized test scores to imitative violence, and TV news has served as a whipping boy for those who believe Americans are no longer the active, responsible participants in civic affairs and the democratic process that they (presumably) once were.

When empirical research indicates low levels of public affairs knowledge, involvement or interest, critics' focus turns to media whose ostensible role is to survey the environment and disseminate that knowledge. Particularly vulnerable is TV news, the public's preferred source according to some scholars (e.g., Levy, 1992, pp. 69-70; Robinson and Levy, 1986).

Tests of viewer learning do show low levels of retention of TV news content. Reviewing factors contributing to TV news' lack of impact, Levy (1992, p. 69) concluded that "people who watch network TV news remember and comprehend only one out of three of the most important news stories reported by some of the world's most sophisticated news organizations." Moreover (pp. 69-70), "people who watch TV news are only slightly better informed than people who do not watch; and, all things being equal, people who say they get most of their news from television are among the least informed members of the public" (see also Robinson and Levy, 1986).

Why is this pervasive medium an ineffective purveyor of public affairs information? On the one hand, television is criticized as "superficial" in its style of coverage of events and issues. On the other hand, the problem might not be with the messenger. Some would argue that the "informed public" has always been more stereotype than reality, or that the public's role--like the role of the media--is an evolving one; citizens today are viewed as disinterested, cynical, and lacking a sense of political efficacy.

Regardless, one assumption that underlies most political communication research is that citizens and mass media performance can be evaluated in terms of "an idealized system, in which all people should be concerned, cognizant, rational, and accepting of the political system, and in which the institutions of communication should be comprehensive, accurate and scrupulously fair and balanced" (Chaffee and Hochheimer, 1985, p. 76).

The goal of this study is not to delve into the responsibilities of citizens, but to explore and describe the alleged "superficiality" of TV news on the "big three" networks (ABC, CBS and NBC) that might contribute to the public's level of knowledge. Because of the potential role of television news in helping overcome gaps in knowledge (Tichenor, Donohue and Olien, 1970); and in helping the public learn which issues are important to think about (McCombs and Shaw, 1972), assess the distribution of opinion on various issues (Noelle-Neumann, 1974), and learn about threats to the public wellbeing (McLeod, et al., 1995), the question of how television covers the news is an important one.

The evidence of TV news superficiality may depend on one's definition. Criticisms target a style ("happy talk") that contributes to trivialization of the tragic; content (topics covered) that focuses inordinately on the "soft" and sensational; and amount or depth of attention (e.g., typically operationalized in terms of the time devoted to stories). Concentration on the trivial, critics argue, is evidenced by the fact that sensational or soft human interest stories have come to be increasingly prevalent as the networks, spurred by "infotainment" programs and public interest in celebrity news, strive to be more entertaining and attractive to viewers (Cook, Gomery and Lichty, 1992, p. xvi).

Amount of time for stories, of course, may be influenced as much by a news organization's willingness to commit resources (Lacy, 1992) as by "style" or news judgment discriminations between hard and soft news. The late 1980s saw increasing criticism of "sound bite" coverage (Hallin, 1992). Meanwhile, cost-cutting at the networks followed changes in ownership and "corporate vision."

Cook, Gomery and Lichty (1992, p. xvii) concluded that the networks' "commitment to any form of sustained, serious journalism came into doubt" during the 1980s, despite flashy success with moving, across-the-board-appeal stories like the San Francisco earthquake, the Gulf War, etc. Those successes notwithstanding, Levy (1992, p. 70) would conclude that "TV's great power to provide drama and emotion is not matched by a capacity to inform in depth about complicated, serious matters."

This study takes a two-decade (1971-1990) look at "superficiality" in TV news, examining change over time in how many items are covered in a newscast, time devoted to different items, and the topics of the items. The focus is on the "big three" American networks (ABC, CBS and NBC), even though CNN is clearly becoming more and more imporant as a news source. No formal hypotheses were proposed for testing; in a 20-year study, the cumulative interaction of technological developments, network competition or personnel changes, and news events themselves, makes it difficult to isolate critical points that mark changes in news "packaging." Yet the strength of this essentially descriptive study is its longitudinal design that does assess those cumulative interactions; it encompasses the early 1970s (with the winding down of coverage of the Vietnam War; growth of network use of satellite feeds; increasing use of video cam technology, etc.), and stretches through the late 1980s when TV news received its most serious criticism (Lichty and Gomery, 1992) since, perhaps, the 1960s.

Method

Using the Television News Index and Abstracts, coders examined nightly newscasts on three networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) for four constructed weeks (Monday through Friday only) per year (1971-1990), controlling for each quarter. One Monday was randomly selected from all the Mondays in each quarter (e.g., January-March, April-June, etc.), one Tuesday was selected, etc., until four constructed weeks per year were selected. The sample was stratified by quarter to help guard against seasonal variation or cycles that might, in a purely random sample, distort the results.

In all, 20 randomly selected dates for each of 20 years were coded, for a total of 400 days and 1,200 newscasts (3 networks X 400 days). Fourteen trained graduate student coders were assigned randomly ordered sets of sample dates (e.g., the first might be Nov. 1, 1989, and the second might be March 3, 1971), to minimize systematic coder bias. After training, composite agreement scores among coders (Holsti, 1969, pp. 137-140) for this study's "judgment" variable (topic) reached .90 and .94 in two separate reliability tests. (Those coefficients reflect coders' initial application of a 25-category topic scheme, but there is no reason to believe that the "collapsed" topic categories used below--hard, soft and bad news--would in any way decrease the reliability of the data.)

For each sample date, coders coded all news items in the newscasts of all three networks. Individual items were defined as those with a distinct beginning time noted and a boldfaced, capped topic identification.

From these data, annual totals of items sampled were calculated, as were annual per-newscast averages. Cross-tabulation yielded annual percentages in different length and topic categories. Chi-square was used to test between-network differences in distribution of items among length and topic categories. To test for changes over time, a non-parametric measure of trend was used (Tintner, 1952, pp. 211-215). Ranks were assigned for years (e.g., a rank of "1" was given to 1990, the most recent year coded) and for prevalence of a pertinent variable for a single network. For example, "1" might be assigned to the year for which ABC had its largest percentage of "soft" news items. A significant positive between-ranks rho would then indicate a trend, across the 20 years, to more "soft" news items. The conventional 0.05 probability level was used to assess statistical significance.

Findings and Discussion

The 1,200 sampled newscasts yielded 17,656 total news items. However, as Table 1 reveals, the networks differed among themselves, and changed over time.

The data are presented in two ways. First, the annual "n" shown under a network indicates the total number of items located by that year's sample of four constructed weeks (or 20 newscasts). For example, in 1971 the sample found a total of 227 items indexed for the 20 ABC newscasts. Inspection of those annual n's reveals that the sample located a decreasing number of items per year.

However, the differences among networks and across time are made clearer when that annual n is divided by 20, yielding an average newscast frequency of items (e.g., for 1971, ABC's 227 divided by 20 yields 11.35 news items per newscast, contrasted with CBS's 16.7 and NBC's 16.75).

These average newscast frequencies lend themselves to speculation. For example, CBS's 1978 average of 24.15 items per newscast was the highest among all three networks across all 20 years. NBC's 1988 average of 10.15 items was the smallest. Moreover, there were precipitous changes that occurred across-the-board (for all three networks). Note 1974 to 1975, for example, as well as changes between 1977 and 1978, the latter the year with the highest averages for all three networks.

But if 1974 and 1975 reflect "peaks" in the 1970s, even a casual glance indicates that, generally (and with a few exceptions), post-1978 newscasts included fewer items. No network in any year after 1978 would average more than 15 items per newscast, a sharp contrast with the 1970s averages that included many above 16.

As intriguing as year-to-year fluctuations are, the overall pattern is more interesting. When ranks are assigned to each year (1990 is "1") and for average number of items per newscast, and between-ranks correlations computed (Spearman's rho), the magnitude of the changes in the nightly package is indexed clearly. Data for all three networks show clear, significant trends toward fewer and fewer items per newscast (rho is -0.51 for ABC, significant at the .01 level; -0.85 for CBS, p<.001; and -0.81 for NBC, p<.001).

(A caveat is in order: rank-order correlation reduces percentages to ranks, exaggerates minimal between-percentage differences and diminishes large ones; similarly, non-significant changes between annual percentages can lead cumulatively to significant overall trends.)

But while the network news programs moved toward less breadth in their newscasts--in terms of number of items per package--the resulting coverage could be called "superficial" in only the most limited sense. That is, because of a network newscast's fixed air time, fewer items mean longer items. Lichty and Gomery (1992, p. 26) have noted that, "A clear recent trend is for each program to try for distinctive, longer-than-average features"; ABC incorporated this approach in 1988, they wrote, while NBC has included longer features since the 1970s.

Table 1 thus suggests that the networks may have sacrificed breadth of coverage for depth of coverage. Or have they? The best answer to that question might come from comparison of annual mean item length. The move to longer news items could be tested using t-tests of those annual means. Unfortunately, the data do not lend themselves to that sort of manipulation.

Instead, Table 2 reports item length using four ordinal categories: percentage of items per year, per network, that were from 1 to 10 seconds long; 11 to 20 seconds long; 21 to 60 seconds long; and those over 60 seconds. Imprecision aside, a good case may be made for the face validity of "percentage-of-1-10-second-items" as a measure of superficiality of coverage! Moreover, an analysis of 1973-1981 network coverage (Riffe, et al., 1986) using the same categories found 20% of items were 20 seconds long (the modal length), 13% were 10 seconds long (the second most common category), and approximately 50% of items were above the median length of 60 seconds (the third most common length).

Some patterns of between-network differences (indexed by significant values of chi-square within a year)--and between-year shifts in network emphases on the different time categories--merit note. The early 1970s saw all three networks allocate a minute or more of air time to nearly half of all items used. The 1983-1990 period signaled a move to a sustained commitment to longer items (paralleling the trend displayed in Table 1).

With only a few exceptions, ABC "led" the move to longer items. While fewer than half the items (note 1971 and 1972 in particular) on the other two networks' 1971-1974 newscasts were longer than 60 seconds, a majority of ABC's items were longer than a minute. In 1976, NBC aired a larger percentage of longer items, though ABC again had the largest percentage in 1977 and 1978. NBC was the 1979-1983 period's leader in airing longer items, and ABC's 61%+ in 1985 and 1986 marked the high points for the 20-year period. Only in 1978 and 1990 did CBS air the largest percentage of long items.

But if ABC aired more items over a minute long, that network also aired the largest percentage of items in the 1-10 second category. In the 1978-1982 period, as many as one in five ABC items was in this category.

Table 3 summarizes Table 2. Using the trend procedure detailed in discussion of Table 1, rho was computed for each network, with separate ranks based on each year's percentage of items in the shortest and longest time categories. The between-ranks rho shows 20-year trends for each network's use of items in each the two "competing" length categories; no network showed a significant pattern of fewer 1-10 second items, but all three showed significant trends toward more 60+ second items across 20 years. ABC's significant trend is not surprising; CBS's shows that its steady, small, year-to-year increase yielded a more marked change.

Two length categories have been excluded from Table 3, and the two categories that are included are interdependent (change in percentage in one length category affects the other). Still, Table 3 trend scores confirm and illustrate Table 2 patterns showing that the networks moved toward more depth coverage (in terms of seconds of air time) during the 20 years studied.

Thus far, the analysis has addressed only two measures, albeit important ones, of alleged TV news "superficiality": items per newscast, and item length. But criticism of superficiality also involves TV news' concentration on "soft" or sensational news.

Table 4 contrasts the three networks for each of the 20 years in terms of whether the news covered fit definitions of "soft" news (human interest, sports, features), "bad" news (sensational crimes, accidents, disasters, etc.) or "hard news" (including all other news, such as politics, diplomacy, defense, economy, etc.).

Perhaps the most striking--given the between-network differences in item length--observation on Table 4 is the lack of difference among networks in the distribution of items among the three categories of news. For all three, hard news dominated, accounting for from 59% to 80% of items. Of course, hard news is the staple of traditional journalism, and similarity among networks has been demonstrated by Stempel (1985), Riffe et al. (1986) and Lemert (1974). "After all," Lemert wrote, "the networks presumably are covering the same world."

But if Table 4 shows the networks can be viewed as "rivals in conformity" (Bigman, 1948) because of their generally similar "mix" across a simple three-category topic scheme, Table 5 provides a slightly different picture. As with Table 3's examination of length data in order to assess 20-year trends, Table 5 looks not at between-network differences but at within-network patterns over time. That is, ranks were assigned, for example, for each network's annual percentage of hard news, and a 20-year trend score computed. As Table 5 shows, all three networks exhibited significant rho trend scores, indexing overall reductions in hard news.

And while percentage of soft news or bad news is not independent of amount of hard news (a decrease in the relative percentage devoted to the latter must increase the percentage of the former), trend scores for those two types provide insight into whether the networks differed in what they used to "fill the void."

Conclusions

Like any study seeking to infer from content to professional practice or organizational policy, this research has its limitations. Most obvious is the reliance on ordinal length categories rather than comparison of mean length scores. And while percentage of items in the 1-10 second range might serve as an operational definition of superficiality, the percentage in the one-minute-or-longer category is only a rough index of network commitment to "depth." Similarly, the question of independence--or lack thereof--among the three topic categories suggests caution in interpreting the trend scores. Finally, because the last year sampled was 1990, one wonders how the years since would affect trend scores. On the one hand, one might anticipate that the continuing popularity of CNN might serve as a wake-up call for network news operations. On the other hand, the "big three" networks might have abandoned that niche and continued the trend to soft or sensational news in order to appeal to a different type of viewer; there has certainly been no dearth of material for such coverage, and tabloid TV news continues to prosper.

But despite those limitations, the study possesses certain strengths. It encompasses a broad time frame and uses a "deep" sample of four constructed weeks per year. And it permits between-network comparisons as well as within-network trend analyses.

The study set out to examine whether network news can accurately be described as "superficial." Is it?

The answer, tentatively proffered, is, "Yes....but."

The data show that, over time, the networks provided less breadth in their coverage, in terms of airing fewer items per newscast--from a high of 24 per half-hour newscast to as few as 10. But of course each of those 10 would take a larger chunk of time. In that sense, the narrower breadth would yield greater depth--hardly "superficial" coverage.

And trend analysis demonstrated that the increase was not merely a shift from 1-10 second headlines, but was also the result of a significant shift overall to more pieces of more than a minute in length.

The third measure of superficiality--topic emphasis on soft news--provided an unflattering portrait of all three "rivals in conformity." ABC, CBS and NBC aired an increasingly greater percentage of items that qualified as soft news, while hard news decreased.

The word "unflattering" is used advisedly. Media evolve, and their content evolves, in response to events, viewer preferences, and market forces. It is beyond the scope of this study to speculate whether TV news' move to fewer, longer and softer items reflects a response to viewer preferences (and corporate desire to appeal to those preferences) or to a changing market, with CNN effectively dominating the "serious" broadcast news niche and the major networks news operations evolving into something else.

But regardless, this paper began by discussing the role of TV news--the preferred news source for many--in people's allegedly woeful levels of public affairs knowledge. The question of those people's interest in or preference for serious depth reports on public affairs notwithstanding, the analysis reported here suggests that the criticism of TV news as increasingly superficial has considerable merit.

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Table 1

Average Frequency of News Items
per Nightly Newscast (n/20),
by Network and Year

Year	ABC		CBS		NBC	
	nightly f	annual (n)	nightly f	annual (n)	nightly f	annual (n)
1971	11.35	(227)	16.70	(334)	16.75	(335)
1972	12.80	(256)	14.50	(290)	15.55	(311)
1973	16.00	(320)	17.15	(343)	17.05	(341)
1974	20.60	(412)	22.35	(447)	21.15	(423)
1975	15.20	(304)	16.55	(331)	14.50	(290)
1976	19.35	(387)	19.25	(385)	16.65	(333)
1977	13.50	(270)	15.95	(319)	13.75	(275)
1978	23.40	(468)	24.15	(483)	23.95	(479)
1979	14.55	(291)	13.90	(278)	12.45	(249)
1980	14.40	(288)	14.25	(285)	12.50	(250)
1981	15.45	(309)	13.90	(278)	13.95	(279)
1982	15.60	(312)	13.85	(277)	14.50	(290)
1983	14.55	(291)	14.65	(293)	14.35	(287)
1984	12.00	(240)	13.15	(263)	12.15	(243)
1985	11.00	(220)	14.05	(281)	11.45	(229)
1986	10.45	(209)	13.85	(277)	12.95	(259)
1987	11.35	(227)	12.20	(244)	11.35	(227)
1988	11.55	(231)	12.10	(242)	10.15	(203)
1989	12.75	(255)	11.95	(239)	12.80	(256)
1990	11.80	(236)	11.15	(223)	11.30	(226)
trend score Spearman's *rho*:	-.51*		-.85**		-.81**	

NOTE: * = p < .01

** = p < .001

The n shown is the annual total of items coded for each network. Four constructed weeks (Monday-through-Friday), or 20 sample days, were used for each year. To determine the average frequency of items per newscast, the annual n was divided by 20.

Table 2

Percentage of News Item by Length, by Network by Year

	1971			1972			1973			1974		
	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC
1-10 sec.	6.3	10.3	14.9	10.5	10.8	22.4	10.6	9.3	16.1	11.2	7.9	15.2
11-20 sec.	21.7	24.9	23.5	24.4	20.3	20.2	24.0	21.6	24.8	26.7	24.2	21.1
21-60 sec.	20.8	31.2	24.3	14.7	25.2	16.0	13.7	21.0	12.0	11.6	18.4	17.2
>60 sec.	51.1	33.6	37.2	50.4	43.7	41.3	51.7	48.1	47.1	50.4	49.4	46.4
n =	221	321	309	258	286	312	321	343	342	464	504	506
X^2 6 d.f., (p)	26.08 (<.001)			32.35 (<.001)			18.92 (<.01)			23.66 (<.001)		

	1975			1976			1977			1978		
	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC
1-10 sec.	8.6	12.4	8.8	5.4	8.3	9.8	10.7	6.6	10.2	19.4	11.5	12.3
11-20 sec.	21.0	23.0	19.0	26.4	22.6	19.7	21.1	30.4	15.3	17.4	13.4	11.1
21-60 sec.	19.4	20.5	20.1	18.9	22.9	19.1	14.4	16.3	24.4	9.8	20.6	22.3
>60 sec.	60.0	44.1	52.0	49.3	46.2	51.3	53.7	46.7	50.2	53.3	54.5	54.3
n =	304	331	294	387	385	335	270	319	275	478	486	479
X^2 6 d.f., (p)	6.67 (n.s.)			11.10 (n.s.)			28.59 (<.001)			44.69 (<.001)		

	1979			1980			1981			1982		
	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC
1-10 sec.	22.3	15.5	14.9	23.9	11.8	14.7	22.0	12.2	15.1	21.1	9.6	14.2
11-20 sec.	20.3	18.3	12.8	16.2	22.5	19.5	16.3	14.8	14.3	20.8	17.3	18.9
21-60 sec.	14.4	17.3	15.3	15.8	19.3	7.6	13.0	20.0	9.1	15.1	23.5	12.1
>60 sec.	42.9	48.9	57.0	44.0	46.4	58.2	48.7	53.0	61.5	43.0	49.6	54.8
n =	291	278	249	284	280	251	300	270	265	298	272	281
X^2 6 d.f., (p)	16.11 (<.02)			35.43 (<.001)			25.29 (<.001)			29.47 (<.001)		

	1983			1984			1985			1986		
	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC
1-10 sec.	16.0	9.7	9.9	8.2	11.6	11.0	9.6	11.8	12.2	9.2	13.1	15.1
11-20 sec.	23.3	19.8	20.8	21.1	16.2	17.7	16.9	17.5	21.0	16.9	20.4	24.0
21-60 sec.	12.2	22.2	14.8	14.2	24.3	16.9	11.9	20.7	16.6	11.6	16.0	14.7
>60 sec.	48.4	48.3	54.4	56.5	47.9	54.4	61.6	50.0	50.2	62.3	50.5	45.7
n =	287	288	283	232	259	237	219	280	229	207	275	258
X^2 6 d.f., (p)	17.95 (<.01)			12.38 (n.s.)			11.56 (n.s.)			14.36 (<.03)		

	1987			1988			1989			1990		
	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC
1-10 sec.	7.6	10.3	11.0	12.6	15.0	13.1	7.6	9.4	15.9	11.6	8.6	14.4
11-20 sec.	24.4	18.2	16.7	22.2	17.5	14.1	27.3	17.0	19.1	25.0	17.6	16.2
21-60 sec.	9.8	17.4	21.1	9.6	14.6	18.7	10.0	19.6	13.9	8.2	14.9	14.0
>60 sec.	58.2	54.1	51.1	55.7	52.9	54.0	55.0	54.0	51.0	55.2	59.0	55.4
n =	225	242	227	230	240	198	249	235	251	232	222	222
X^2 6 d.f., (p)	15.88 (<.05)			10.94 (n.s.)			23.60 (<.001)			13.74 (<.05)		

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Table 3

Trend Scores for Annual Percentages of News Items in "Short" (1-10 sec.) and "Long" (> 60 sec.) Categories

20-year trend (rho) for items:

	1-10 seconds long	> 60 seconds long
Network:		
ABC	06	39*
CBS	20	74**
NBC	-15	39*

NOTE: * = p < .05

** = p < .01

Decimals removed from values of rho. Trend scores are based on annual percentages in these categories as shown in Table 2 and are computed using same procedure as in discussion of Table 1.

Table 4

Percentage of News Item by Topic, by Network by Year

	1971			1972			1973			1974		
	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC
hard news	75.6	70.1	74.5	75.9	77.4	74.1	75.1	74.6	76.4	77.1	79.6	79.4
soft news	11.3	16.7	11.7	11.1	11.5	14.9	9.9	10.2	13.1	10.8	8.3	8.5
bad news	13.1	13.0	13.8	13.0	11.1	11.0	15.0	15.2	10.5	12.1	12.1	12.1
n =	221	331	333	253	287	309	321	343	342	464	504	506
X^2 4 d.f., (p)	5.19 (.27)			2.83 (.59)			5.42 (.25)			2.16 (.71)		

	1975			1976			1977			1978		
	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC
hard news	74.6	75.0	78.2	75.6	78.7	74.6	77.4	80.0	76.7	68.4	68.9	61.8
soft news	9.9	10.2	7.5	8.6	7.0	10.5	9.2	6.5	11.3	16.5	17.9	19.6
bad news	15.5	14.8	14.3	15.8	14.3	14.9	13.4	13.5	12.0	15.1	13.2	18.6
n =	304	331	294	387	385	335	270	319	275	478	486	479
X^2 4 d.f., (p)	1.94 (.75)			3.17 (.53)			4.21 (.38)			8.23 (.08)		

	1979			1980			1981			1982		
	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC
hard news	79.3	79.9	76.0	76.4	71.5	73.7	77.3	79.2	80.7	70.5	67.4	67.6
soft news	10.0	11.1	13.2	11.3	13.9	11.2	12.0	9.3	11.0	13.6	17.0	16.4
bad news	10.7	9.0	10.8	12.3	14.6	15.1	10.7	11.5	8.3	15.9	15.6	16.0
n =	297	278	249	284	280	251	300	270	265	308	276	287
X^2 4 d.f., (p)	2.09 (.72)			2.48 (.64)			2.65 (.62)			1.51 (.82)		

	1983			1984			1985			1986		
	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC
hard news	64.4	64.1	63.4	65.7	65.0	63.4	66.2	59.9	62.7	59.8	61.1	64.7
soft news	18.3	19.3	20.1	20.4	18.8	20.6	19.4	22.4	18.4	22.5	19.6	18.2
bad news	17.3	16.6	16.5	13.9	16.2	16.0	14.4	17.7	18.9	17.6	19.3	17.1
n =	289	290	284	230	260	238	216	277	228	204	275	258
X^2 4 d.f., (p)	.31 (.99)			.80 (.94)			3.25 (.52)			1.98 (.74)		

	1987			1988			1989			1990		
	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ABC	CBS	NBC
hard news	66.5	68.8	67.7	72.3	70.8	67.7	68.8	67.8	64.5	68.5	64.4	63.4
soft news	17.4	15.2	17.7	20.8	20.4	22.7	17.4	14.4	21.3	17.5	18.5	21.0
bad news	16.1	16.0	14.6	6.9	8.8	9.6	13.8	17.8	14.2	14.0	17.1	15.6
n =	224	244	226	231	240	198	253	236	254	228	222	224
X^2 4 d.f., (p)	.84 (.93)			1.61 (.81)			5.16 (.27)			1.93 (.75)		

Table 5

Trend Scores for Annual Percentages of News Items in "Hard," "Soft" and "Bad" News Categories

20-year trend (rho) for items that are:

	Hard News	Soft News	Bad News
Network:			
ABC	-59*	78**	17
CBS	-64*	62*	55*
NBC	-61*	74**	34

NOTE: * = $p < .01$

** = $p < .001$

Decimals removed from values of rho. Trend scores are based on annual percentages in these categories as shown in Table 4 and are computed using same procedure as in discussion of Table 1.

Television Station Sites
on the
World Wide Web

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Abstract

This study used content analysis to examine the World Wide Web sites created by television stations. Of 123 stations, 82 percent had e-mail mechanisms for viewers to contact the station, 77 had links to program information, and 74 percent had links to information about the station's local news operations. Stations are just beginning to offer content on their sites to supplement their on-air newscasts, with text versions of news stories the most commonly featured.

Television Station Sites on the World Wide Web

Introduction

The World Wide Web became a major force in computer mediated communications in 1995, and its growth continues into 1996. American broadcast television stations are jumping on the bandwagon, and putting their own home pages on the Web at a rapid pace. From an estimated eighty television station Web pages in September, 1995 (The Internet..., 1995), the number had already increased to about 175 by the end of the year (Murrie, 1995), and are likely to be much higher in mid-1996. This rate of growth appears to be consistent with that charted for the World Wide Web in general (Hoffman, Novak and Chatterjee, 1995).

Such growth would seem to have an obvious impetus. Seers into the electronic future predict that home computers connected to a network will supersede television as an American pastime (Negroponte, 1995). Meanwhile, television stations are generating more content than they can use, even with the increase in the amount of news programming at most stations. The World Wide Web may be one place where that surplus of content may be put to use. In fact, the digital world is not bound by time or space, since stories can be kept on a Web page indefinitely, and news organizations suddenly find they have a "bottomless" news hole (Hume, 1995).

Besides offering a benefit to stations, Web-based news offers a benefit to consumers as well: interactivity. Interactivity will allow news viewers the opportunity to be in greater control over the material they want to see. That control can be exercised simply by selecting links between certain types of news stories (Hume, 1995). Additional links might also take the viewer from the station's page to related information, perhaps dealing with politics or consumer information.

But to date, there have been no systematic surveys of these Web pages, and whether television stations are adapting to the new possibilities of the digital age. This paper attempts to remedy that condition, and its importance lies in its description of early television content on the Web. The paper content analyzes a large sample of the available television station Web sites, to describe how these sites are being used and draw conclusions about how they may eventually augment a station's news coverage.

Literature Review

The growth in the use of the World Wide Web by television stations has been chronicled episodically, especially by *Broadcasting and Cable* magazine. The broadcast networks' Web sites appeared to get attention first (Berniker, 1995, Feb. 3), but when local stations started setting up their own home pages in larger numbers, that was duly noted (Jessell, 1995; Berniker, 1995, Mar. 13), as was the tendency of station groups to develop Web sites for their stations (Eggerton, 1995).

Linn (1995a) described typical findings at television station Web sites. He generalized that a station's "home page" provided some information about the station, the station's news anchors, and the station's programming. These efforts seem to be aimed at establishing the station's presence within the new medium of the Internet, and are also consistent with anecdotal findings elsewhere (Magid, 1995). Stations also view the Web pages as a useful promotional tool (The Internet..., 1995; Jessell, 1995; Eggerton, 1995). But there are indications that some stations may be using their Web pages for more than just promotional purposes. Some stations see the Web as a way to provide information that could not fit into local newscasts (Berniker, 1995, Mar. 13). For instance, Boston's WCVB used its Web page to provide information on a serious snowstorm:

> "The Blizzard of '96" not only produced winning ratings for WCVB which easily led the Boston market in viewers, but also produced mega-hits for WCVB's Web Site "5 Online." WCVB logged more than 1 MILLION hits for the week. Managing Editor Neil Ungerleider says a mix of on-air promotion and strong content has made "Storm Tracking" on the WCVB Web Site a must for many viewers away from the television or for those who want to use radar images and satellite maps to make their own predictions ("The Blizzard...", 1996).

A smaller station in Abilene, Texas, used its new site for the same purpose:

> Our lovely ice storm gave KTBS a good reason to push our Web site on the Internet ahead of schedule. We used the opportunity to post (and update several times per hour during the afternoon and evening) a list of school closings, travel conditions and other weather-related information. It was a great chance to introduce our viewers (and management) to the potential of the World Wide Web as a supplemental source of information (Carden, 1996).

Many are trying to figure out how to make money in the new medium (Linn, 1995b; Berniker, 1995, June 6; Eggerton, 1995, Apr. 3). In an investigation of commercial possibilities on the World Wide Web, Hoffman et al., (1995) identified six broad classifications of Web sites: Online Storefront, Internet Presence (Flat Ad, Image and Information), Content (Fee-Based, Sponsored, Searchable Database), Mall, Incentive Site, and Search Agents.

The first three types are characterized as Destination Sites, since they are ultimately the places the user intends to visit. Online Storefront sites offer direct sales by electronic means through the Web. The range of products being sold include things from flowers and candy to CDs and banking services (Hoffman et al., 1995).

Internet presence sites allow a company to establish itself on the Web. That presence may also signal customers and competitors that the company is ahead of the pack. Hoffman et al. break the presence site into three types: flat ad, image, and information. Flat ads are the web equivalent of a newspaper ad; they have no hypermedia links, that is, buttons which, when clicked, take the Web user to a different Web page. Image sites appeal to the user's emotions rather than rational thought. Information focuses on the consumer values of the product, or the meaning it has to the consumer. Image sites seem to be especially useful for products with low hard-information content, for instance, Zima's Web page, or to cite two broadcasting-related examples, CBS Eye on the Net and Late Night With David Letterman (Hoffman et al., 1995). Information sites provide detailed, rational information about the firmand/or its offering. Such sites appeal to motivated consumers who are ready to buy, but they seem to be at least partly designed to establish a relationship between the company and the consumer even though the consumer may not have an immediate need for the product. Acura, Volvo, FedEx and Apple Computer are cited as examples of information Web pages (Hoffman et al., 1995).

In Fee-Based content sites, the consumer pays to access content. Some information and news pages already charge either an access fee or a usage fee for summaries of information and news stories. Sponsored content sites, on the other hand, sell advertising space on the Web page itself. In this instance, advertising underwrites the company's cost of maintaining a Web page, and it is analogous to selling space in a newspaper or magazine, or air time on a television station. Searchable databases include information about merchants or advertisers, and the company, rather than the consumer, pays for the service. They are the opposite of fee-based content sites. Because content sites in general have close relations to traditional media models, they may have the potential to expand rapidly (Hoffman et al., 1995).

Hoffman et al. dub the mall, incentive, and search agent categories of Web sites as "traffic control sites," because they are designed to help people move around in the Web environment, and more easily find what they want. Mall sites generally feature various online storefronts, each of which may have different categories of goods for sale. Incentive sites offer encouragement to a Web user to enter a particular Web site, and are connected to commercial sites which are accessed from the incentive site. Hoffman et al. indicate that incentive sites serve much the same function as malls. Lastly, search agents exist to identify other Web sites by doing keyword searches of a database that covers the Web. Search agents may be advertiser-supported, as is Yahoo, or fee-based, such as InfoSeek (Hoffman et al., 1995).

Despite the rapid growth of the World Wide Web, it is likely that most home computer users still fall into the "early adopter" classification (Perse and Dunn, 1995). Their motivations for accessing the Web and viewing television Web sites are worth considering. Perse and Dunn found that the reasons most often cited for using computers were to pass time and out of habit. They note that those are signs of ritualistic use of media, which focus on gratifications offered by the medium rather than any specific content. They add that computer connectivity seems to fill similar needs as television, entertainment and escape.

However, computer owners tend to watch television and cable less than non owners. But because computer owners are more likely to be in higher income and education groups,those groups are less likely to watch television to begin with (Perse and Dunn, 1995). It would therefore seem that the creation of a station Web site could capture people who might otherwise not view the station's programming.

Stations that create Web sites must also consider how they will be used by the public. Hoffman and Novak (1995) suggest that it is useful to consider the idea of "flow" here.

Flow is the extent to which consumers, working in a hypermedia environment, feel a sense of control over their actions within that environment, focus on the interaction, and enjoy themselves while doing it (Hoffman and Novak, 1995). But flow can take on two aspects: Goal-directed flow and Experiential flow. Web users engaged in Goal-directed flow activities are those who intend to wind up at a particular Web site, while those involved in Experiential flow are "surfing," examining a variety of sites, going where the links will take them (Hoffman and Novak, 1995). Web site designers must be cognizant of both kinds of flow, and design sites that will appeal to both types of Web users. If a site's offerings are interesting and compelling enough, an Experiential user who stumbles across the site may become a Goal-directed user in the future, who purposely accesses the page to seek specific information.

Research Questions

This study has two main goals: to describe what uses television stations most commonly make of their World Wide Web pages, and how their Web pages are used to supplement the information provided on a station's newscasts. Such a description could serve as a starting point for further research on the World Wide Web as it is put to greater use by broadcasting stations. There are several research questions to be addressed:

1. What features are found most often on station web sites?

2. Do stations make use of the web to supplement their news programs?

2a. What kinds of information are provided to supplement news programs?

3. Are stations using the web to generate revenue?

4. Does the station's network affiliation indicate how likely it is to have a site on the World Wide Web?

5. Does the station's market size indicate how likely it is to have a site on the World Wide Web?

Methodology

The unit of analysis for this study was individual television station sites on the Web. Because the number of television sites is growing so rapidly, a sample was taken rather than attempting to study the entire population. The online Yahoo directory was the first to provide a guide to sites on the Web, and it catalogs commercial television stations in the Eastern U.S. and Western U.S. While Yahoo does not list every station's page, it does include a large number. An arbitrary decision was made to study those television station Web sites cataloged in Yahoo as of February 14, 1996. At that time, 139 stations were listed in the Yahoo directory. An examination of those sites turned up two cable-only stations, which were dropped from the study, which aims to examine only over-the-air television stations. Other sites were dropped when their URLs (Universal Resource Locators, or Web addresses) could not be found using the Netscape 2.0 Web browser. Still other stations had temporarily closed down their sites while redesigning them for what presumably will be a more elaborate presentation. The resulting *n* was 123. Two coders, both Ph.D. students in Mass Communications, were used in the study.

There is no set of standards for Web site design, although plenty of suggestions for the design of effective sites are available (see, for example, online help provided within Netscape). Each station seems to design its pages according to information it thinks is important to convey to Web users. A random examination of approximately a dozen television station Web sites prior to the start of the study provided guidance as to the types of information most frequently found within Web sites. Four broad levels of categories were established: Home Page, News Page, Personality Bios, and Advertising Presence.

Each Web site in the study was accessed via Netscape 2.0, and a checklist was used to account for the presence of various items on the site. At the home page level, the coders looked for the presence of information about programming, weather, sports, news, community events or information, and a feedback mechanism, usually in the form of e-mail back to the station. Coders also noted other types of information displayed on the home page.

If, and only if, a station's home page contained a link to its local news page, coders then examined the "news page" of each station's Web site. Since news is the most important local programming effort and creates the public image of most television stations, it was assumed most stations would have a separate page for news programming. On the news page, coders looked for a link to the news unit of the network affiliated with the station. Coders also checked for actual news content, in the form of news stories in text, still pictures, audio, or moving video. Coders were asked to differentiate between current news information and archived news information, that is, information from stories covered more than two days before the day of the study.

Coders checked each station's entire Web site to determine if it featured any advertising presence, defined as mention of or link to companies or services which use the site for advertising purposes. In other words, was the site sponsored? The response was either yes or no, and no effort was made in this study to determine the complexity or type of Web site advertising.

Finally, coders checked to see if information about station on-air personalities was featured anywhere on the site. Such information could usually be expected to take the form of biographical sketches of personalities, especially news anchors. Again, coders simply indicated if the information was present or not. Intercoder reliability was 94 percent.

Results

Research Question 1. Because one of the goals of this study was simply to see what kind of information is available at television Web sites, much of the findings are descriptive. Research question 1 is answered by a list of percentages of stations putting certain information on their sites. At the home page level, the feedback mechanism, or e-mail to the station, is the most frequently found type of information, with links to program schedules second, and links to the station's local news department following in third place.

Links to information by type	Percent of stations
Feedback	82.1
Program schedules	77.2
Local news	74.8
Weather	65.0
Community information	42.3
Sports	56.1
Station information	26.1
Kids features	18.7
Featured Web links	17.0
Link to network	13.8
Sales dept.	12.2
Station job listings	8.9
Engineering dept.	8.9
Online marketplace	8.9

Television stations do furnish information about their on-air personalities, but perhaps not to the extent that Linn (1995) suggested. Biographical sketches of personalities could be found at any level of a station's Web site, not necessarily accessible directly from either the home page or the news page. This result contributes to answering Research Question 1.

Type of information	Number of stns.	Percent of stns.
On-air personality info	76	61.8

Research Questions 2 and 2a. At the news page level, percentages are used to indicate the extent to which certain news material appears on a Web site. It appears stations are starting to provide original content on their Web sites, at least in the form of news stories in text version. The results for Research Question 2, therefore, show that stations do use the Web to supplement their on-air news programming, and the following list of types of information provided answers Research Question 2a.

Advertising presence	Number of stns.	Percent of stns.
Yes	11	8.9
No	112	91.1

Type of news information	Number of stns.	Percent of stns.
Current news - text	42	34.1
Current news - still pictures	9	7.3
Current news - audio	2	1.6
Current news - video	0	0
Archive news - text	27	22.0
Archive news - still pictures	3	2.4
Archive news - audio	0	0
Archive news - video	1	0.8

Research Question 3. Television stations do not seem to be using their Web sites as revenue generators. One site featured an advertiser at the top of its home page. When the ad is clicked, the Web user is taken to another of the sponsor's advertisements, this one created specifically for use on the Web. Most other Web sites simply list advertisers by name, which can be clicked for more information—usually from the advertiser's own home page.

Research Question 4. Stations affiliated with the "Big Three" networks are most likely to have a World Wide Web site. Very few stations not affiliated with networks, or affiliated with the fifth and sixth networks, UPN and WB, have sites.

Affiliation	Number of stns.	Percent of stns.
None	2	1.6
ABC	29	23.5
CBS	35	28.4
NBC	31	25.2
Fox	18	14.6
UPN	5	4.1
WB	3	2.4

Chi-square tests were run to compare the type of news information on the site (those types referred to in the results for Research Question 2 and 2a) and the station's network affiliation to see if network affiliation could predict whether a station was more likely to use the Web. However, these tests showed no significant relationships, except in one case: a station's network affiliation and whether it offered current news text materials on its site, χ^2 (6, N=123) = 14.2, $p < .05$. ABC and CBS affiliates offered current news in text form more often than stations affiliated with NBC, Fox, UPN, or the WB networks, or with no network affiliation.

Current news text by network affiliation

	None	ABC	CBS	NBC	Fox	UPN	WB	Row Total
Yes	0	11 26.8%	18 43.9%	6 14.6%	6 14.6%	0	0	41 33.3%
No	2 2.4%	16 19.5%	18 22.0%	26 31.7%	12 14.6%	5 6.1%	3 3.7%	82 66.7%
	2 1.6%	27 22.0%	36 29.3%	32 26.0%	18 14.6%	5 4.1%	3 2.4%	123

Research Question 5. It does appear that market size can affect the likelihood of a station having its own Web page. Medium market stations, market size 26-100, have substantially more Web pages than either large or small market stations.

Market size category	Stns. with Web pages	Percent of stns.
Large market	35	28.5
Medium market	59	47.9
Small market	28	22.8

Chi-square tests were also run to compare the type of news information on the site and the station's market size category, large, medium, or small, to see if market size could be a predictor of Web involvement. No significant difference was found in any of those tests. The answer to Research Question 5, then, is that medium market stations are more likely to have Web pages than stations in large or small markets, but there appears to be no relation between market size and what types of news information are found on a Web site.

Discussion

It is apparent from these findings that the use of the World Wide Web by television stations is still in its nascent stage. But the number of stations with Web sites cataloged in Yahoo had already increased to 164 by the end of March, 1996 (Yahoo, 1996). Although the number of stations supplementing their newscasts with news information on their Web sites is still small, it also appears to be growing. Therefore, the value of this study may be that it takes a snapshot of what television news in a new medium looked like in the early days of its development.

That stations are still trying to figure out what to do with their Web sites is evident by the types of links offered at the home page level. E-mail from the viewer to the station, personality bios, and information about favorite entertainment programs and newscasts may have light informational value. Flashy graphic design may attract eyes, but if television stations want to keep Web users returning to their sites, they must provide material those users can use. Usable material will likely be in the form of supplemental news coverage and information.

Stations seem to be getting the idea that content will be one of their Web site staples in the future. Those that are providing content now seem to be gingerly getting their toes wet in the digital pool, by dumping digitized text onto their Web pages. Such stories sometimes take the form of relatively short headline treatments, but a few stations simply put their complete newscast scripts on their news page, complete with the arcane technical instructions. One station offered viewers a link to help on reading a television script. Stations offering still pictures on their Web sites usually did so in conjunction with text materials, the still serving the same purpose as a newspaper photograph. Only one station was found that offers downloadable video versions of previously-aired stories.

These approaches may work for the time being. But content in this new medium will go beyond just text. Audio, video, and graphics can all be offered. If stations lack the technical facilities to make those types of information available, there are other options, such as providing links to information sources related to the story at hand, information sources not connected with the station. News departments must then work to assemble deeper information that can answer questions raised by the stories covered in their newscasts.

Stations' use of the Web is clearly a decision made at the station level, with little apparent involvement of the station's network, although there was an early move to group station Web pages together on commercial online services (Berniker, 1995, June 6). The Big Three networks still are generally affiliated with local stations that have the most active news departments and the largest revenues. Therefore, it is no surprise that those stations are more likely to be on the Web. The autonomy from the networks that stations heralded with the onset of satellite news gathering would seem to be increasing as they independently create Web sites that reflect their own visions of their mission.

It might be expected that large market stations would have had more Web pages available than medium or small market stations. However, there are only 25 large markets, compared to 75 medium and 110 small markets. Still, large market stations have larger news staffs and greater resources available to create a site. The time and personnel involved in maintaining a Web site certainly play a role in determining whether a station will create one or not. Even those stations that have created sites must wrestle with the demands of keeping them updated with new material. One large market station's current news text included bylines for the staffer who wrote the story. But a news department at a medium market station reported:

> In the 60th market we can't dedicate a staffer to rewrite news for the Web. We are automating our system to take text from our newsroom computer system which is quite old and tricky to interface with. Mark Chamberlin (personal e-mail correspondence, March 25, 1996).

Although no significance was shown in the relationships between market size and type of news information offered on the Web site, it is worth noting that more medium market stations displayed either current text materials or archive text materials than large market stations.

It is also worth noting that in a medium like the World Wide Web, where a college student's personal home page can be as well-designed as that of a major corporation, there is no qualitative relationship between market size and Web page design. One of the most pleasing Web sites to navigate was found at a small market station on the East Coast, while a large market station in the Southwest offered nothing more than a picture of its news anchors.

Future research on television station Web sites should examine supplementary news materials, and whether stations are using the sites to provide more explanatory and background information on news stories. Research could also investigate whether sites are viewed by the stations as image and marketing venues, or content venues.

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CREDIBILITY AND PERCEPTIONS OF NETWORK TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE OF THE O.J. SIMPSON TRIAL

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Credibility and Perceptions of Network Television News Coverage of the O.J. Simpson Trial

Television news coverage of the O.J. Simpson double murder trial in Los Angeles has been both heavily criticized and hailed. Former journalist Marvin Kalb, of Harvard University, stated that coverage of the Simpson case, "trivializes real news." (Sharkey, 1994, p. 20) ABC News Senior Vice President Richard Wald, however, stated that covering topics of interest to people is at the heart of "the business of mass daily journalism."

Few communication studies have been published on the perceptions and effects of real courtroom drama in U.S. homes via network television. The Simpson trial indicates "...television becomes a kind of control center for decisions about news," Everette Dennis of the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center stated. (Sharkey, 1994, p. 20) An important question is whether news should be viewed strictly as a commodity. Answers to such questions might affect future TV news coverage of celebrity or high profile trials. An ironic twist concerning the general public is that survey results show there was overall dissatisfaction with the media coverage of the Simpson trial. (Sharkey, 1994) Yet, CNN and other electronic news operations reported heavy viewership of their daily trial coverage. The general public apparently does not understand that, on network TV news and from other TV sources, it saw a socially constructed view of the trial, not the trial itself.

Drucker (1989) did a case study examining components of face-to-face trials compared with what she termed televised mediated trials. "Ultimately, we suggest here that televised trials constitute a distinct genre—the televised mediated trial—possessing unique substantive and stylistic features which can be distinguished from other kinds of trials and other types of televised programming." (Drucker, 1989, p. 305) Drucker stated that television redefines the legal process in terms of mass understanding. She wrote that televised mediated trials blurred the distinction between news coverage of the legal system and entertainment. Drucker wrote that televised mediated trials had two main purposes. The first purpose of such trials was to educate the general public about the U.S. legal system. The second main purpose was to provide entertainment.

One of O.J. Simpson's attorneys, Robert Shapiro, wrote "The television media, either consciously or unconsciously, create an atmosphere of chaos." (Shapiro, 1994, p. 28) The major U.S. TV networks devoted a total of 26 hours and 50 minutes to the Simpson trial in 1995, making it the top story of the year in terms of time devoted to a story, according to the October 16, 1995 edition of *U.S. News and World Report* . By comparison, the war in Bosnia garnered just over 13 hours of network news coverage, and the Oklahoma City bombing story just under 9 hours of coverage, as of October 1995. The news coverage of the so called "trial of the century" presents many potential research questions for those studying the media.

As for the effects of the Simpson trial on TV and other news coverage, *USA Today* reported on October 4, 1995, that an average of 2.3 million households tuned in to the Simpson trial on CNN every weekday from noon to 8 p.m. Eastern Time in the 36 weeks of the trial. In 1994, during the same period, CNN only averaged 470,000 households. NBC and CBS did not offer live daytime coverage and as a result lost both viewers and revenue. NBC lost approximately two million viewers and CBS had to repay tens of millions of dollars because it could not deliver viewers to advertisers.

The power of televised mediated trials to inform and entertain has been restricted because of laws prohibiting cameras in courtrooms. The American Bar Association, in 1952, called for courts in the United States to bar television cameras from legal proceedings. (Kaufmann, 1992) By the late 1960s, 47 states had issued such bans in keeping with the ABA judicial cannons. Several states in the 1970s began to experiment with cameras in the courtroom, and by 1981, they numbered 20. A Sixth Amendment related decision by the United States Supreme Court (Chandler v. Florida, 1981) allowed states to continue experimenting. (Drucker, 1989) Nelson, Teeter and LeDuc (1989) stated that by 1981, 12 states had permanent arrangements for allowing cameras in trial courtrooms and 15 had ongoing experiments. In 1990, the ABA dropped its objections to cameras in the courtroom. (Kaufmann, 1992) By the mid-1990's, only four states continued to ban cameras in the courtrooms.

In regards to the Simpson trial, this paper will examine the coverage offered by the network evening news programs compared to the public's perceptions of the trial coverage. It will also answer the question of which medium the public perceived to have provided the most credible coverage of the trial.

Literature Review

In their study titled "Some Correlates of Media Credibility," Westley and Severin (1964) stated:

> Analysis of the reasons given for preferring one of the media in the case of conflicting reports, and an analysis of the relationship between use of the media and believability, together suggest that newspapers gain in a direct contrast with television because they are perceived both to be right more often and to be wrong more often. (p.34)

Carter and Greenberg (1965) conducted research on the relationship between media use and credibility. In a telephone interview study of some 500 adults in San Jose, California, the researchers found that there was a significant relationship between the media a person uses and the credibility the person assigns to those media. In the case of conflicting news reports, the relationship was much stronger. Shaw (1973) found a correlation between media use and credibility in a questionnaire study of some 650 students conducted at a midwestern university. In a national telephone survey of 1600 adults measuring the concept of credibility conducted by Gaziano and McGrath (1987), the researchers concluded that the credibility of television news increases as the focus moves from local, to state, to national, to international.

Newhagen and Nass (1989) conducted a national combined telephone interview and questionnaire study concerning the use of different criteria for evaluating the credibility of newspapers and TV news. The researchers noted that as of 1989, TV news had for three decades continually out-scored newspaper credibility. Newhagen and Nass defined credibility from a receiver-oriented perspective as, "credibility is the degree to which an individual judges his or her perceptions to be a valid reflection of reality." (p. 278) The researchers defined mass media credibility as the perception of news messages as a plausible reflection of the events they depict. The researchers concluded:

> This article suggests that many respondents base their perception of credibility or confidence in a newspaper on its performance as an institution, while they base their perception of credibility on the standards and trustworthiness of television news on the performance of an aggregate of on-camera personalities. (p. 284)

Which medium Americans get most of their news from no longer seems to be a relevant question. Stempel (1991) wrote that the answer depends on the type of news being sought. A national telephone survey of 501 respondents was conducted concerning sources of news. The findings refuted a long standing assumption held by many that the general public gets its news primarily from television. "This study makes it abundantly clear that most people don't get most of their news from television. They do use television for the three types of national news included in this study, but clearly, it is newspapers they turn to for local news." (Stempel, p. 8)

DeFleur, Davenport, Cronin, and DeFleur (1992) examined sources of news in an experimental study limited to college students. DeFleur et al. studied audience recall of news stories, which were artificially generated, and presented in the formats of newspapers, computers, television and radio. DeFleur et al., stated that previous studies had yielded inconsistent findings concerning which medium serves audiences best as a source for learning. Some 480 students participated in experiments in the DeFleur et al. study. The findings were clear in that newspaper presentations were remembered best. DeFleur et al., however, acknowledged that their study was not generalizable to the general population. Nevertheless, DeFleur et al. (1992) stated "That is, TV has clearly become the most popular source for exposure to news stories, while research shows that such content is not well remembered." (DeFleur et al., p. 1022)

In a study on patterns of recall among television news viewers, Neuman (1976) stated that, in sharp contrast with print media, television news viewing is not correlated with education. Neuman suggested that TV may be a "knowledge-leveler" between the better and less educated segments of the population.

McDonald (1990) studied the connection between media orientation and television news viewing. McDonald surveyed 364 households in a small Northeastern city. McDonald wrote that "It is somewhat surprising that television news orientation is as medium-specific as it appears to be. Contrary to expectation, orientation was unrelated to newspaper exposure." (McDonald, p. 20)

There have been several other studies conducted concerning recall of and learning from TV news such as Housel (1984) and Wicks and Drew (1991). Few recent studies, however, have looked at both recall and credibility of newspaper readership and television news viewing.

Statement of Hypotheses

A total of six hypotheses were developed concerning adults' perceptions of the Simpson trial coverage.

Hypothesis #1: Major U.S. television network evening news reports of the O.J. Simpson murder trial concentrated less on legal procedures happening inside the courtroom than on events happening outside the courtroom.

Hypothesis #2: Major U.S. television network evening news reporters relied heavily on paid outside experts (or consultants) to provide analysis or explain legal proceedings and consequences concerning events in the O.J. Simpson trial.

Hypothesis #3: Major U.S. television network evening news coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial participants focused more on personality traits and appearances rather than upon the legal roles and activities of the participants.

Hypothesis #4: Most survey respondents will confirm that newspaper coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial was deemed more credible when compared with other media sources of news.

Hypothesis #5: Most survey respondents will agree that major TV network evening news coverage of the Simpson trial concentrated less on legal procedures happening inside the courtroom than on events happenings outside the courtroom.

Hypothesis #6: Most respondents will agree that major TV network evening news coverage of the Simpson trial focused more heavily on personality traits and appearances rather than upon the legal roles and activities of the participants.

The research for this paper included a content analysis of a total of 60 network TV newscasts, which included 71 stories, and a national survey of 1005 respondents.

Content Analysis Methodology

The content analysis consisted of four constructed weeks (Monday through Friday) following the method discussed by Ohio University Professor Daniel Riffe et al. (In Press) of the network evening news programs for, ABC, CBS, and NBC from January through

September 1995. These dates represented the actual trial coverage of the Simpson trial. Pre-trial and post-trial coverage was not included in this study. Specifically, the network news programs were: *ABC World News with Peter Jennings*, *CBS Evening News*, and *NBC Nightly News*.

The source for the news transcripts for ABC was the Broadcast News CD-ROM produced by Research Publications International. CBS and NBC News transcripts on CD-ROM were produced by the UMI Company. The Vanderbilt Television News Index was consulted via Searchnet to verify the number of Simpson stories per network.

The content analysis portion of this study revolved around three hypotheses. The analysis compared mentions of legal events inside the courtroom versus mentions of Simpson related events happening outside the courtroom (H 1), anchor or correspondent self contained reports versus reports containing interpretation or commentary by outside legal consultants (H 2), and showings or comments about main trial participants' personalities or appearances versus straight reports of legal proceedings involving participants (H 3).

A coding pretest yielded 87% reliability on the above coding categories between the five coders, who were graduate students in the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University. A Chi Square Goodness of Fit Test was conducted on content analysis results.

Content Analysis Results

Hypothesis #1: This hypothesis was not supported. The hypothesis stated: Major U.S. television network evening news reports of the O.J. Simpson murder trial concentrated less on legal procedures happening inside the courtroom than on events happening outside the courtroom. See Table 1 below:

Table 1

Reports on Events Inside the Courtroom vs. Reports on Events Outside the Courtroom by the Three Television Network Newscasts

	# of Reports	Percentage
Events Inside Courtroom	54	76%
Events Outside Courtroom	5	7%
Events Both In and Outside	12	17%
Total	71	100%

$x^2 = 59.37$, df = 2, $p < .01$

Hypothesis #2: This hypothesis was not supported. The hypothesis stated: Major U.S. television network evening news reports relied heavily on paid outside experts (or consultants) to provide analysis or explain legal proceedings and consequences concerning events in the O.J. Simpson trial. See Table 2 below:

Table 2

Network News Reports Relied on Reporters versus Consultants

	# of Reports	Percentage
Reporter Only	41	58%
Consultant Report	15	21%
Reporter & Consultant	15	21%
Total	71	100%

$x^2 = 19.05$, df = 2, $p < .01$

Hypothesis #3: This hypothesis was not supported. The hypothesis stated: Major U.S. television network evening news coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial participants focused more on personality traits and appearances rather than upon the legal roles and activities of the participants. See Table 3 below:

Table 3

Network News Reports Focused on Personality Traits or Legal Activities of Participants

	# of Reports	Percentage
Participants' Appearance	6	8.5%
Legal Roles/Activities	59	83.0%
Both appearance/legal roles	6	8.5%
Total	71	100%

$x^2 = 79.15$, df = 2, $p < .01$

To restate, contrary to expectations, the content analysis found that network evening news coverage of the Simpson trial concentrated on events inside the courtroom, relied on their own reporters, and focused on the legal roles of the participants.

Survey Methodology

In January and February of 1996, a national telephone survey of 1005 randomly selected adults was conducted by the Bush Research Center at the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University in conjunction with the Scripps-Howard News Service. The sample was drawn randomly by computer. The first step was to draw a zip code randomly. The matching telephone area code then was selected. An existing exchange in that area code was drawn randomly. A random four digit number was added to that exchange. A respondent was selected randomly at the designated number by the interviewer asking for the adult in that household who would next celebrate a birthday. The questionnaire contained approximately 50 questions on various topics. Three of the questions on the survey pertained to media coverage of the Simpson trial.

Respondents were asked to name the medium which they thought provided the most credible coverage of the trial. The exact wording of the question was, "Please think back to the murder trial of O.J. Simpson. In general, which was the most believable in its coverage of that trial--newspapers, magazines, radio news or television news?" Respondents were then asked two questions concerning network TV news coverage of the trial. One question asked, "Did network evening newscast coverage of the Simpson trial concentrate more on the trial and events in the courtroom, or on events outside the courtroom?" The other question was, "Did network evening newscast coverage of the Simpson trial focus more on personalities, or more on the legal issues?"

Survey Results

Standard error of proportion calculations were performed on the tables below relating to hypotheses #s 4-6.

Hypothesis #4: This hypothesis was not supported. The hypothesis stated: Most survey respondents will confirm that newspaper coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial was deemed more credible when compared with other media sources of news. Most of the respondents thought that television news provided the most believable coverage of the Simpson trial. See Table 4 below:

Table 4

The Medium, In General, Which Provided The Most Believable Coverage of the Trial

Medium	# of Responses	Percentage
Newspapers	124	12.3%
Magazines	28	2.8%
Radio	49	4.9%
Television	475	47.3%
None	147	14.6%
Uncertain	128	12.7%
Other response	51	5.1%
Not Ascertained	3	.3%
Total	1005	100%

Using standard error of proportion, all differences between newspaper and other media are significant at the .01 level and all differences between TV and other media are significant at the .001 level.

Hypothesis #5: This hypothesis was not supported. The hypothesis stated: Most survey respondents will agree that major TV network evening news coverage of the Simpson trial concentrated less on legal procedures happening inside the courtroom than on events happenings outside the courtroom. As shown in Table 5, respondents said the coverage focused on legal proceedings inside the courtroom.

Table #5

TV Coverage Focused on Events Inside Courtroom or Outside The Courtroom

	# of Responses	Percentage
Focus On Events Inside Courtroom	354	35.2%^{a}
Focus on Events Outside Courtroom	337	33.5%^{b}
Uncertain	198	19.7%^{ab}
Other Response	112	11.1%
Not Ascertained	4	.4%
Total	1005	100%

Using standard error of proportion, values with the same superscripts are significantly different at the .01 level.

Hypothesis #6: This hypothesis was supported. The hypothesis stated: Most respondents will agree that major TV network evening news coverage of the Simpson trial focused more heavily on personality traits and appearances rather than upon the legal roles and activities of the participants. See Table 6 below:

Table 6

TV News Coverage Focus on Personality Traits/Appearances or on Legal Roles/Activities

	# of Responses	Percentage
Focus On Personality Traits and/or Appearances	581	57.8%[ab]
Focus on Legal Roles/Activities	170	16.9%[a]
Uncertain	171	17.0%[b]
Other Response	78	7.8%
Not Ascertained	5	.5%
Total	1005	100%

Using standard error of proportion, values with the same superscripts are significantly different at the .001 level.

Survey Cross Tabulations

Cross tabulations in the Scripps-Howard/Ohio University national survey showed that the findings were significant across different ages and incomes. All age demographics believed that television provided the most credible coverage of the Simpson trial. Though differences were significant at the .05 level for all age demographics, persons between ages 18 and 24 were much more likely than those 25 and older to say TV news was more credible. See Table 7 below:

Table 7

Newspaper versus Television News Credibility in the Simpson Trial By Age
(Figures Below Are Percentages)

Medium	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Newspapers	13%	12%	13%	12%	13%	11%
Television	69%	49%	47%	45%	41%	39%

Table 8 shows that credibility of the Simpson trial coverage decreased as income levels increased. The gap between television and newspaper credibility was significant at the .001 level for all income groups except 60K+, where the difference was significant at the .05 level. Those with higher incomes were less likely to consider TV news as more credible.

Table 8

Newspaper versus Television News Credibility in the Simpson Trial by Income Level (Figures Below Are Percentages)

Income Level	< 10K	10-25K	25-40K	40-60K	> 60K
Newspapers	11%	10%	10%	13%	20%
Television	67%	57%	48%	43%	36%

Cross tabulations also show that adults in all age demographics said the Simpson trial TV news coverage focused more on personalities' appearances and characteristics than on legal roles and issues as shown in Table 9.

Table 9

TV News in Simpson Trial Focus More on Personalities' Characteristics or Legal Issues

TV News Focus	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Personalities	13%	12%	13%	12%	13%	22%
Legal Issues	69%	49%	47%	45%	41%	35%

Differences were significant at the .001 level for all age groups. Again, persons between the ages of 18 to 24 were much more likely to state that TV news focused more on legal issues than on personalities' characteristics.

Discussion

The findings of this study did not support one of the conclusions of the Westley and Severin (1964) study on media credibility in that newspaper coverage of the Simpson trial was not seen as more credible than TV news coverage. This study did support Gaziano and McGrath's (1987), and Newhagen and Nass' (1989) findings that TV news is deemed more credible on the national level. This study also supported Stempel's (1991) research which concluded that most Americans utilize television for national news stories. The findings indicate that adults who are older and who earn more income found network TV news to be less credible concerning Simpson trial coverage.

The Simpson trial coverage was unusual in that it was a state murder trial covered heavily by national and international news media. Most state murder trials do not receive such intensive media scrutiny, and federal cases would not receive the same television coverage because of laws prohibiting cameras in the courtrooms. In March of 1996, the U.S. Judicial Conference recommended that judges in civil cases at the federal level be allowed to decide whether to allow cameras in the courtroom on a case by case basis. Despite a 1947 proclamation by the U.S. Supreme Court that a trial in court "is a public event" (Denniston, 1994), the ban on cameras in federal criminal courts remains in force.

This study supports Drucker's (1989) finding that televised mediated trials tend to blur the distinction between news coverage and entertainment. The content analysis showed the network TV news coverage of the Simpson trial focused primarily on the legal events. However, the Scripps-Howard survey respondents' perceived it to focus more on personalities.

TV news viewers' perceptions may also be changing because of the combination of facts and informed opinions in news broadcasts. As noted on Table 1 in the content analysis, 17% of the reports contained both a reporter and consultant. Did this combination prevent the public from distinguishing between the reporter's facts and the consultant's educated opinion? The combination of consultants and reporters in TV network news coverage of the trial also brings up the question of "why?" Are the networks using consultants because they want to provide additional information, or are they losing faith in their reporters' abilities to provide all the relevant information in a story?

Implications and Further Research

The results of this content analysis—showing that the major TV networks, in fact, were careful to keep most of their news reports focused on legal events and not on personalities—may surprise TV news critics, the viewers, and perhaps some electronic journalists themselves. CBS News Anchorman Dan Rather, for example, told a CNN interviewer (King, 1996) that the major TV networks' news coverage of the Simpson trial could have been a lot better. The question remains, why did adults perceive that TV news focused more on the entertainment aspects of the Simpson trial? Has the influence of tabloid TV journalism grown to such an extent that the mass television audience can no longer differentiate between serious reporting and gossip? As Ehrlich (1996) stated:

> Both investigative and tabloid journalists tell morally outraged stories of right and wrong, but only investigative journalists really "mean it." With a smirk and a wink, tabloid reporters dissociate themselves from the stories they tell, as if to remind the viewer that it is all just a diversion, a show for one's amusement, outrageousness merely for the sake of outrageousness. (Ehrlich, p. 17)

Ettema and Glasser (1994) question whether contemporary TV viewers can tell the difference. This seems to be an area for future study. Perhaps the respondents to the Scripps-Howard survey could not distinguish between the network evening news, live TV coverage, and tabloid TV coverage of the trial. As tabloid journalism continues to creep into mainstream TV viewers' consciousness, people's perceptions of the differentiation between news and entertainment may be blurring.

This study's findings demonstrate the paradox that while adults may find TV news more credible than other media during coverage of national events such as the Simpson trial, in fact, the TV viewers' perceptions of coverage in such cases may be inaccurate. This leads to the question of whether TV network owners and executives, including news executives, understand the confusion and possible negative consequences that their ratings based decisions seem to be creating among viewers of such celebrity trials.

Further study is needed along the line of Drucker's (1989) research on the results of face-to-face versus televised mediated trials and on TV news coverage of celebrity based events. Also, further research into national news coverage of celebrity trials might focus more specifically on what the public recalls and on what they learn from various media.

Limitations of this study include not involving cable network newscasts, such as CNN's, in the analysis. There was a time lag of four months between the end of the Simpson trial and the survey. Also, no comparison of content was made between newspaper stories on the Simpson trial and TV network newscast coverage, or between network evening newscasts and newscasts during other times of the day.

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Evaluating Satisfaction with Cable Television: An Attribute Based Approach

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Evaluating Satisfaction with Cable Television: An Attribute Based Approach

Abstract

Satisfaction is becoming a relevant criterion in cable subscribers' selection of a multichannel video provider. An attribute based approach to evaluating satisfaction is demonstrated using data collected from a random sample of cable subscribers in a local market. Subscriber attribute importance, performance, and overall satisfaction were measured. Employing the Kano Model, the attributes were categorized based on two measures of importance. Overall satisfaction and attribute performance evaluations were then interpreted in light of importance groupings.

Evaluating Satisfaction with Cable Television: An Attribute Based Approach

In an increasingly competitive mass media environment, attracting consumers is necessary but retaining them is paramount. Creating satisfaction is central to the success of media providers because satisfied consumers (audiences) are likely to remain loyal while the dissatisfied seek out alternatives. In the cable television industry, where system operators have traditionally held monopolies in local communities, satellite and other wireless delivery systems now offer competing multichannel video services in a growing number of areas. Telephone companies are also preparing to compete through overbuilds (Bürgi, 1995). Consequently, satisfaction is becoming a relevant criterion in cable subscribers' selection of a multichannel video provider.

What is publicly known about subscriber satisfaction with cable television service comes from three sources: anecdotal evidence presented by the media, publicly reported market research, and academic studies profiling cable subscriber satisfaction. The media have chronicled subscriber complaints about frequent service outages, unresponsive customer service representatives, fee increases associated with re-tiering of cable services, and mandatory upgrades of cable converters. This sizable body of anecdotal evidence suggests widespread consumer dissatisfaction with cable service (see e.g., Snyder, 1991; Robichaux, 1992; Moss, 1993; Robichaux, 1995a; Robichaux, 1995b).

Publicly reported market research offers mixed evidence of subscriber dissatisfaction with cable service. A Consumer Reports survey of over 200,000 of its subscribers ranked cable television last among services scored on a satisfaction index (Staff, 1991). Still, only 25% of the respondents expressed overall dissatisfaction with their service. A national Conference Board survey reported only 9% of the participants rated cable's value as good while 51% rated it as poor. Pay cable service fared even worse in the Conference Board Survey, with 65% of respondents rating its value as poor (Higgins, 1993).

Academic studies indicate the majority of cable subscribers are generally satisfied with their service, but many have complaints about specific performance characteristics. For example, Metzger (1983) reported that 70% of basic cable subscribers felt cable was excellent or good, but 50% rated premium services fair or poor. Becker, Creedon, Blood, and Fredin (1989) examined cable subscribers' satisfaction with cable programming as part of a larger study of cable television in people's lives and found about 66% were satisfied with their service. More recently, Atkin's (1992) study of subscribers in a midwestern college town revealed that 16% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their cable programming, 22% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with installation and repair, and 33% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with customer service.

Clearly, the evidence on subscriber (dis)satisfaction with cable television service is equivocal. Moreover, the academic findings on subscriber satisfaction are dated and limited in scope. Metzger's (1983) and Becker, Creedon, Blood, and Fredin's (1989) studies report just a small amount of relevant data and were conducted in an early stage of cable's diffusion when penetration was less than 50% of U.S. television households compared with nearly 65% today (National Cable Television Association, 1995). Atkin's (1992) data are more informative, but the industry has changed considerably since the study was conducted in 1988. Most important, these studies fail to systematically assess subscriber perceptions of cable television attributes.

More current and complete knowledge of subscriber satisfaction would enable cable system operators to improve their service thus reducing subscriber complaints, dissatisfaction, and inoculating subscribers against the marketing efforts of competing services. To achieve a better understanding of consumer satisfaction with cable service and the sources of subscriber dissatisfaction, cable television must be evaluated as a multi-attribute service, where attribute performance evaluations are examined relative to the importance consumers place on those attributes. This study provides a descriptive assessment of cable subscriber satisfaction. In the process, it presents an approach to analyzing attribute performance and importance measures that can be easily replicated by cable system operators and managers of other media.

Satisfaction, Performance & Multi-Attribute Products

A good deal of consumer and mass communication research has been conducted to study satisfaction formation processes. Hunt (1977) describes satisfaction as a customer's post-purchase evaluation of a product or service. A customer is satisfied when a product performs better than expected, dissatisfied when expectations exceed performance. This line of thinking is representative of the expectation-disconfirmation paradigm which posits that an individual's expectations are either confirmed when a product performs as expected, negatively disconfirmed when the product performs more poorly than expected, or positively disconfirmed when a product performs better than expected (Oliver, 1980). Negative disconfirmation results in dissatisfaction. Conversely, confirmation or positive disconfirmation result in satisfaction. The paradigm's constructs--expectations, performance, and disconfirmation--have been studied across a range of products and found to successfully explain and predict consumer satisfaction (Churchill & Suprenant, 1982; Tse & Wilton, 1988). However, in the context of this research the impact of performance on satisfaction has received relatively little attention (Swan, 1988; Yi, 1990).

Studies that conceptually distinguish between performance, expectations, and disconfirmation have found performance has a separate and often the largest effect among the variables used to explain satisfaction. For example, Churchill and Suprenant (1982) found that among a set of expectation-disconfirmation constructs performance was the most significant predictor of satisfaction with a video disk player. Swan (1988) studied the performance-satisfaction link for food and service in restaurants and found performance to be the most significant predictor of satisfaction with food. Similarly, communication researchers examining satisfaction with television news (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979) and communication technology use in organizations (Dobos, 1992) found that gratifications obtained (product performance) measures were stronger predictors of satisfaction than expectation and disconfirmation.

One problem with the operationalization of performance in satisfaction research is that even in studies of multi-attribute products and services performance is often treated as a uni-dimensional construct, measured either as a single attribute or using an index of performance and relating it to overall satisfaction. Nonetheless, some researchers have focused on the relative significance of specific product/service attributes. For example, Day (1977) proposed that satisfaction formation is a learning experience that involves recognizing salient attributes and forming expectations about them. LaTour and Peat (1979) also argued that satisfaction is a function of attribute level comparisons where each outcome is weighted by its stated importance. Thus, the more important an attribute, the greater its impact on overall satisfaction. Recently, Bolton and Drew (1991) found that consumers assigned different weights to attributes when evaluating service satisfaction.

Determining Attribute Importance

Attribute importance, also referred to as attribute salience (Day, 1972; Wilkie & Pessemier, 1973), is critical to understanding how satisfaction evaluations are formed. Several approaches to determining attribute importance, such as self-stated importance ratings and various statistically determined importance weights (Neslin, 1981; Jaccard, Brinberg & Ackerman, 1986), have been evaluated although primarily in terms of their impact on product choice or attitude formation (Mittal, Katrichis, Forkin, Konkel, 1994). Relatively little convergence between these methods has been found suggesting different measures may be tapping into different dimensions of importance (Jaccard et al., 1986). Therefore, the utility of simultaneously employing two or more measures of attribute salience is worthy of consideration.

The Kano Model of Importance, developed by Noriaki Kano, a Japanese quality engineer, employs two measures of attribute importance to enhance the confidence with which conclusions can be drawn about the significance of each attribute in satisfaction formation (Rich, 1993). The first measure, direct importance, is derived from the self-stated attribute importance ratings of respondents. The second measure, motivational importance, is derived from the correlation of attribute performance evaluations with a measure of overall satisfaction. These data are then plotted for each attribute on a dual importance grid that classifies the attributes into one of four categories, *desired, expected, surprising*, or *other*, based on the contribution made to overall satisfaction.

Desired attributes have both high levels of stated and motivational importance; strong performance on these characteristics enhances, while weak performance reduces, satisfaction with the product or service. *Expected* attributes are high in stated importance but low in motivational importance. These are essential attributes of performance, such as accurate billing for cable service, and providing them does little to enhance overall satisfaction but removing them or poor performance on these characteristics can hurt consumer satisfaction. *Surprising* attributes are those consumers say are not particularly important but are high in motivational importance. Consumers will view the provider of these attributes favorably and although satisfaction may not suffer when these attributes are not offered, their discovery and delivery can significantly enhance overall satisfaction. Finally, *other* attributes, low in direct and motivational importance, have little impact on consumer satisfaction and require little attention from the service provider.

Research Questions

The intent of this study is to systematically evaluate consumer (dis)satisfaction with cable television service. The focus is on attribute level performance, combined with enriched measures of attribute salience, to improve our understanding of overall subscriber (dis)satisfaction. This approach to researching subscriber satisfaction and the findings generated will direct cable system operators in allocating resources to better serve the wants and needs of subscribers. This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What is the magnitude of consumer (dis)satisfaction with cable television service?
2. Which cable television service attributes are most important to the formation of consumer satisfaction?
3. How do consumers evaluate cable service across a range of performance attributes?

Method

Subject Selection

A representative sample of cable television subscribers was drawn from the Hartford, Connecticut area. In a multi-stage sampling procedure, three cable franchises were selected from those operating in the area, then local communities serviced by each system were sampled. Active telephone exchanges for the selected communities were then compiled. The list of telephone numbers, generated by random-digit dialing techniques, was obtained from Survey Sampling, Inc., Fairfield, Connecticut. Interviews were conducted between November 9 and November 23, 1992 by paid communication graduate students trained for the project. A minimum of two attempts were made to contact busy, no answer, and machine answered numbers. The survey period coincided with the 1992 Presidential election and post-election period.

A total of 338 telephone interviews were completed with cable subscribers for a calculated response rate of 41% (the adopted response rate formula, used by MCI when filing information with the FCC, is reported in Lehmann, 1989). In comparison, when using Frey's (1989) "self-serving" formula the rate is 67% and Frey suggests one should expect a rate no higher than 70-75% with this formula. Given the timing of the interviewing period and the growing resistance of consumers to telephone surveys due to increased telemarketing activity (Remington, 1992), the response rate attained in this study is reasonable.[1]

To establish the comparability of study respondents with Hartford area cable subscribers, local cable population demographics are provided for evaluation with the sample demographics.[2] The population demographics are noted parenthetically. Survey respondents were 53% female (Pop.=52% female) and reported paying an average of $32.40 per month for cable. Seventy-one percent had no children under the age of twelve (Pop.=68% have no children under twelve) and the average household size was 2.8 members (Pop.=average household size of 2.7). The sample was relatively affluent with 45% reporting incomes over $60,000 (Pop.=50% over $50,000) and 11% reporting incomes over $100,000 (Pop.=12% over $100,000). In terms of educational achievement, over 28% earned a bachelor's degree or higher (Pop.=31% with bachelor's degree or higher). The most common subscription level was basic service.

Measures

The importance and performance evaluation items were developed based on the generation of identifiable cable service performance attributes. Information was collected in personal interviews conducted with cable subscribers to assist in this process. Previous studies of consumer satisfaction were also consulted for question structures that were appropriate for this study. In total, 15 items were created to measure subscribers' importance and performance ratings of cable service attributes. The characteristics tested fall into dimensions such as costs (e.g., installation, monthly, value of cable), programming (e.g., variety, quality, number of commercial-free channels), service (e.g., number of channels, reliability, picture quality), customer service (e.g., ease of reaching telephone representatives, quality of assistance by telephone personnel, ease of scheduling service, expertise of service personnel) and communication (e.g., quality of communication, accuracy of billing).

Cable service performance was measured by asking respondents to think about the quality of the service offered by their cable provider, then rate system performance for each of the attributes (4=excellent; 1=poor). Overall satisfaction with cable service was coded on a 4-point scale (4=very satisfied; 1=very dissatisfied). Respondents were asked to "consider everything" and express their level of satisfaction with their cable service. Direct (stated) importance was measured by asking respondents to rate the importance of each of the 15 cable service attributes (4=extremely important; 1=not at all important). Motivational importance was measured by correlating the attribute performance ratings with the measure of overall satisfaction.

As reported in the subject selection section above, demographic and subscription-based measures were included as well.

Data Analysis

Univariate analyses of the overall satisfaction, performance ratings, and direct attribute importance were conducted. The performance ratings for the 15 attribute items were correlated (Pearson's r) with the overall satisfaction measure and the direct and motivational importance rankings compared. The next step was to identify the relative salience of the cable service attributes by employing the Kano Model and the dual importance grid as described above. The grid quadrants were demarcated by the median scores identified in the frequency distributions of the direct importance means and motivational importance correlations. The cable attribute performance ratings were then examined in light of their importance to overall consumer satisfaction with cable service.

Table 1 about here

Results

Tables 1 and 2 present frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations of the performance and importance attribute ratings, respectively. The attributes are rank ordered in each table, from high to low, based on the item means. The overall satisfaction ratings are also included in Table 1.

Over 80% of these cable subscribers can be considered satisfied; 23% indicated they were very satisfied but a majority 58% were only somewhat satisfied. Seventeen percent were somewhat dissatisfied and just 2% were very dissatisfied. None of the attributes received excellent evaluations by more than 35% of the respondents. Subscribers scored billing accuracy, picture quality, the number of channels offered and technical expertise the best (80%-89% excellent or good ratings). These attributes were followed by weaker ratings for service reliability, telephone assistance, and the ease of reaching and scheduling customer service (72% to 76% excellent or good ratings). Appraisals were even lower for program variety, the value of cable, program quality, and communication (64% to 67% excellent or good ratings). Installation costs, the number of commercial-free channels, and monthly cost were judged as generally fair to poor.

Table 2 about here

The direct importance ratings (Table 2) reveal five items--billing accuracy, picture quality, program quality, monthly cost, and service reliability--whose stated importance (extremely or very) exceeds 90%. The importance of technical expertise and program variety (88% and 83% extremely or very important, respectively) were also moderately high. Attributes of lesser importance focus primarily on the customer service characteristics of cable service (75%-79% extremely or very important). The final three attributes, number of channels, commercial-free channels, and communication with subscribers, are of limited direct importance to subscribers.

The Pearson correlations for motivational importance are also included in Table 2. Among the correlations, those between overall cable satisfaction and the ratings for number of commercial-free channels and billing accuracy attributes are low (.25 and .26, respectively). The strongest associations are still only moderate in strength as reflected in the correlations between overall satisfaction and program variety (.40), technical expertise (.41), telephone assistance (.43), and service reliability (.45). All the attribute performance ratings are significantly correlated (p<.001) with the overall satisfaction measure.

Table 3 about here

It is interesting to note the differences in the ranking of the attributes on the direct and motivational importance measures (Table 3). For example, billing accuracy ranks first in direct importance but next to last in motivational importance. Monthly cost and picture quality rank second and third, respectively, in direct importance but only eighth and ninth in motivational importance. In contrast, service reliability and quality of telephone assistance rank first and second in motivational importance but only fourth and ninth, respectively, in direct importance. Greater consistency across the direct and motivational importance measures emerges in the bottom third of the attribute rankings. Examining these measures of importance simultaneously in the dual importance grid provides a more revealing picture of what drives consumer satisfaction with cable television service.

Figure 1 about here

Of the 15 service attributes classified in the dual importance grid (Figure 1), five of them are *desired*. Not only did these consumers say these attributes were important, but they have a strong impact on overall satisfaction with cable service. Service reliability central to cable service and is the most strongly correlated with overall satisfaction. Cable service that is highly reliable will promote subscriber satisfaction; the converse is, undoubtedly, also true. Although somewhat lower in motivational importance, the same can be said for the technical expertise of cable system personnel. The programming attributes--variety and quality--can be easily overlooked, but programming has become a major reason why consumers subscribe to cable so its importance is understandable. Program variety approaches the surprising quadrant suggesting a lack of variety will not seriously reduce satisfaction, but its existence will earn subscriber recognition. The monthly cost attribute falls within the *desired* quadrant, but very near the *expected* sector. Subscribers say this is extremely important but reasonable monthly fees are not particularly influential in satisfaction formation, perhaps because consumers expect reasonable cost for cable service as with other utilities such as local telephone service. Monthly costs perceived as excessive would, obviously, harm satisfaction.

The *expected* attributes, high in direct importance but low in motivational importance, do little to improve overall satisfaction but can negatively affect satisfaction when performance is weak. This is especially true for billing accuracy which is extremely low in motivational importance. Billing accuracy and picture quality are both "musts" of cable service. Poor performance in these areas will reduce subscriber satisfaction.

Surprising attributes, low in direct importance yet high in motivational importance, are not a top priority for consumers, but subscribers have a more favorable overall view of the service when performance in these areas is strong. An easily reached customer service department, quality telephone assistance, and good value are all seen as nearly equally important by subscribers, but quality telephone assistance is the strongest motivator of satisfaction. These attributes' close proximity to the desired sector indicates subscribers may be somewhat influenced by poor performance in these areas.

The five *other* attributes, with low stated and motivational importance, have the smallest affect on overall satisfaction and demand the least attention of cable system operators. Surprisingly, subscribers apparently do not view a large number of channels as highly salient, and this is especially true for the number of commercial-free offerings. Moreover, consumers often pay discounted installation costs and as a one time expense this characteristic lacks importance. The same is generally true for the other attributes in this quadrant.

Figure 2 about here

Better informed about the salience of each attribute to the formation of satisfaction with cable service, it is now appropriate to take a closer look at the cable service attribute performance ratings (Figure 2). Like the frequency distributions in Table 1, the most striking feature of this chart is the relatively mediocre mean ratings of nearly all the attributes. All but two received ratings below a reasonable standard of "good," although several approach that level. Among the *desired* attributes, performance is generally between fair and good, so there is clearly room for improvement that would likely lead to enhanced overall satisfaction. This is especially true on the monthly cost dimension rated as just fair. The program quality and variety attributes may not be entirely under the control of the cable system operator, but service reliability is definitely another area that can be improved. The evaluation of technical expertise is basically good. Among the *expected* attributes, on average subscribers rate performance as slightly better than good. This is important because poor performance in these areas would likely cause consumer dissatisfaction. Good or better ratings for billing accuracy and monthly cost suggest two less reasons for subscriber dissatisfaction. Performance on the *surprising* attributes is also between fair and good; improving these evaluations would also provide an opportunity to boost overall satisfaction but they need not be a top priority.

Discussion

Contrary to the anecdotal and market research evidence, these results indicate most cable subscribers in the market studied are generally satisfied with their cable service but, as the high percentage of somewhat satisfieds suggests, that sentiment is not strong. Moreover, subscribers are not as deeply dissatisfied with customer service as other academic studies (e.g., Atkin, 1992) and the media have suggested. Nevertheless, since most respondents do not perceive performance across the attributes as excellent, there is clearly room for improvement.

The methodology employed here reveals the performance perceptions of cable subscribers and facilitates the creation of an informed hierarchy of attribute importance. Based on the attribute importance analysis, of the fifteen service characteristics examined five are *desired* and, therefore, the most important. When performance falls short, as is the case here, these should be the first focus of system operator attention since these are areas that are hurting but can also enhance satisfaction. The relatively low rating of system reliability by these respondents suggests their cable systems would benefit from increased subscriber satisfaction by improving service dependability. Unlike reliability, which is within the control of the system operator, programming variety and quality are more difficult to improve. Despite an abundance of new specialized cable networks, program variety has not grown much since many fill their schedules with reruns. And program quality is admittedly beyond the direct control of system operators. Evaluations of monthly cost could stand the greatest improvement. The Cable Act of 1992 (Pub. Law 102-385) rolled back cable rates for some subscribers and held increases since its passage to a minimum. Therefore, subscribers may now evaluate rates more favorably. Subscriber evaluations may also improve as competition becomes more widespread and establised system operators lower subscription rates to compete more aggressively.

Expected attributes should be the next priority. Evaluations of the billing and picture quality attributes are good, but could also be improved. Efforts should be directed toward incremental change, but concentrated primarily on maintainence since current performance is not negatively affecting overall satisfaction.

Given the availability of resources, the *surprising* attributes warrant attention next and they are in need of improvement. The value of cable is a function of cost and quality, so enhancements among several of the attributes discussed above will likely boost perceived performance on this attribute. Improvements in the customer service function, in the forms of additional and better trained phone service representatives, would surprise subscribers and translate into better attribute evaluations and enhanced satisfaction. Although the absence of strong performance in these areas may not have a significant negative impact on subscriber satisfaction, strong performance can create "credits" in the consumer's mind that inoculate against occasional bad performance and serve to build a more loyal subscriber base.

The *other* performance characteristics are relatively inconsequential. While it could be argued several are deserving of greater attention, generally they can be placed at the bottom of the list in terms of resource allocation.

At this point, several limitations of this study should be addressed. The cross-sectional design did not allow for monitoring of changes in attribute importance or performance ratings over time. Local cable operators should use longitudinal tracking studies to follow changes in performance and, perhaps more importantly, changes in attribute importance. Other studies have found attribute importance changes over time as use of a product or service evolves (Mittal et al., 1994) and this would have important strategic implications for system planning and management.

While broad generalizations from these findings should be made with caution since the sample is only representative of the cable subscribing population in one market, that is exactly the reason for this type of research. Research conducted on a local level allows system operators to track their performance among sufficiently large samples of their subscribers and make informed decisions about how to manage the system. Monitoring the performance of competitors is also prudent to arm managers with information for use in defensive and offensive marketing and sales strategies. If subscriber performance and satisfaction ratings are desired at a national level, then further research should be conducted on nationally representative samples.

Beyond the immediate utility of this study to cable system operators, the description of the Kano Model is especially valuable. Its approach to analyzing performance and importance measures offers managers of all media a straightforward way to understand and implement attribute based customer satisfaction research. For example, in the highly competitive world of magazine publishing, satisfaction studies could be conducted among readers to ascertain the extent to which the publication is meeting audience wants and needs. The same is true for newspapers, broadcast media, online services, virtually all mass media. Research of this type also provides insights beyond those provided by traditional audience measurement research which, arguably, gives media managers an indication of when audiences are satisfied (ratings are up) or dissatisfied (ratings are down). Skillfully designed attribute based satisfaction studies begin to reveal why.

Notes

[1] Details of the interviewing are as follows: Of the 1700 numbers in the list of telephone numbers 31.5% were ineligible non-households (business, government, and non-working numbers), 32.2% were unreachable (no answer/busy/answering machine) after a minimum of two attempts, 9.9% were refusals/terminations, 6.5% were ineligible households (nonsubscribers), and 19.8% were completions.

[2] Demographic data for Hartford area cable subscribers were provided by Cox Cable Greater Hartford, Inc. and TCI Cablevision of Central Connecticut.

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Table 1
Frequency Distributions of Attribute Performance Ratings

Attributes	Excellent %	Good %	Fair %	Poor %	Mean	Std. Dev.
Billing accuracy (n=334)	35.0	53.9	7.8	3.3	3.20	0.72
Picture quality (n=336)	28.6	56.8	11.0	3.6	3.10	0.72
# of channels (n=333)	21.3	59.2	16.5	3.0	2.98	0.70
Technical expertise (n=231)	18.6	64.5	11.3	5.6	2.96	0.72
Service reliability (n=327)	18.3	56.9	19.6	5.2	2.88	0.75
Telephone assistance (n=254)	19.7	54.3	20.5	5.5	2.88	0.78
Easy reach cust. serv. (n=261)	18.0	54.4	20.7	6.9	2.83	0.79
Easy to sched. serv. (n=234)	12.4	59.4	19.2	9.0	2.75	0.78
Program variety (n=335)	13.1	53.7	27.8	5.4	2.74	0.74
Value of cable (n=330)	11.8	51.8	29.4	7.0	2.68	0.77
Program quality (n=334)	7.8	56.6	28.4	7.2	2.65	0.72
Communication quality (n=305)	12.5	53.1	22.3	12.1	2.65	0.84
Installation cost (n=259)	5.0	45.2	37.5	12.4	2.42	0.77
# of commercial free (n=304)	3.6	42.8	35.2	18.4	2.31	0.81
Monthly cost (n=332)	3.3	23.5	44.3	28.9	2.01	0.81
Overall satisfaction[a](n=338)	23.0	58.0	17.0	2.0	3.02	0.68

[a] Scale: 4=Very satisfied, 3=Somewhat satisfied, 2=Somewhat dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied

Table 2
Frequency Distributions of Direct Importance
Ratings & Motivational Importance Correlations

Attributes	Extremely %	Very %	Somewhat %	Not At All %	Mean	Std. Dev.	Correlation with Oversat.*
Billing accuracy (n=337)	55.8	37.1	5.9	1.2	3.47	0.66	.26
Monthly cost (n=336)	56.3	35.4	8.0	0.3	3.47	0.65	.36
Picture quality (n=337)	46.6	46.3	7.1	0.0	3.39	0.61	.34
Service reliability (n=336)	46.4	44.9	7.4	1.2	3.36	0.67	.45
Program quality (n=337)	43.9	48.1	7.1	0.9	3.35	0.65	.38
Technical expertise (n=315)	40.3	47.9	10.5	1.3	3.27	0.69	.41
Program variety (n=337)	29.1	54.0	15.7	1.2	3.11	0.69	.40
Easy reach cust. serv. (n=330)	33.0	46.4	18.2	2.4	3.10	0.77	.37
Telephone assistance (n=323)	30.3	47.4	19.2	3.1	3.05	0.78	.43
Value of cable (n=335)	30.7	45.7	21.8	1.8	3.05	0.77	.39
Easy to sched. serv. (n=316)	27.2	51.3	18.4	3.2	3.02	0.76	.30
Installation cost (n=309)	33.7	40.8	20.1	5.5	3.02	0.87	.33
# of channels (n=338)	16.3	43.2	34.6	5.9	2.69	0.81	.32
# of commercial free (n=330)	23.0	24.2	37.3	15.5	2.54	1.01	.25
Communication quality (n=336)	13.4	29.8	40.2	16.7	2.39	0.91	.33

*all correlations significant at p<.001

Table 3
Rankings of the Direct and
Motivational Importance Ratings

Attributes	Direct Importance	Motivational Importance
Billing accuracy	1	14
Monthly cost	2	8
Picture quality	3	9
Service reliability	4	1
Program quality	5	6
Technical expertise	6	3
Program variety	7	4
Easy reach cust. serv.	8	7
Telephone assistance	9	2
Value of cable	10	5
Easy to sched. serv.	11	13
Installation cost	12	11
# of channels	13	12
# of commercial free	14	15
Communication quality	15	10

Figure 1
Cable Service Attribute Dual Importance Grid

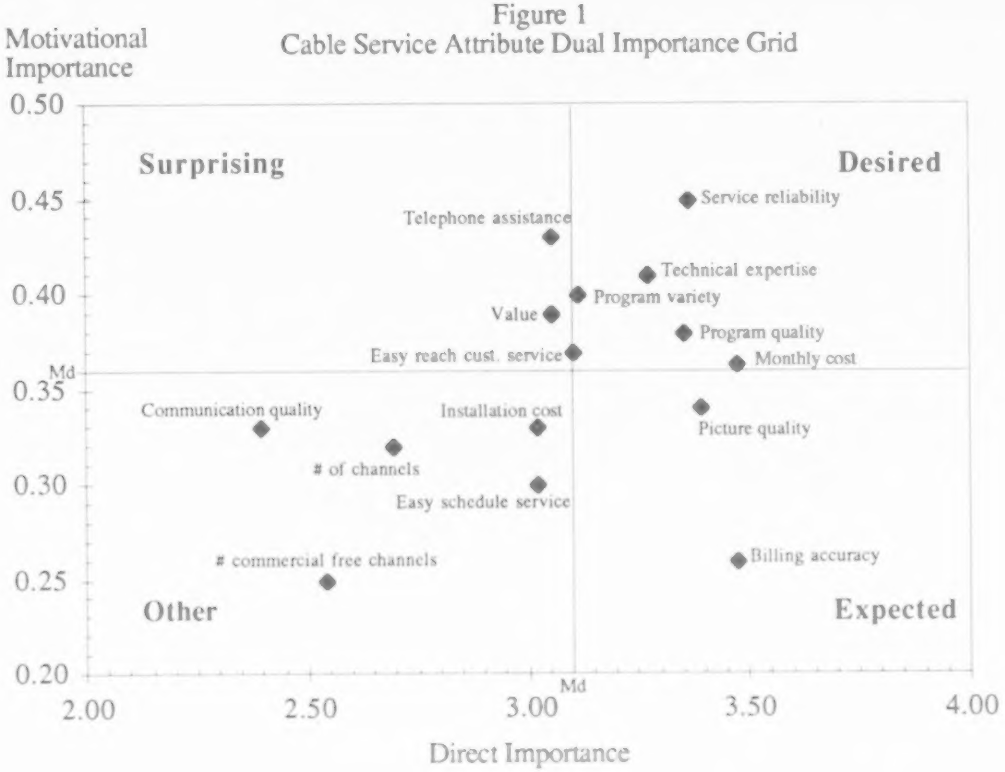
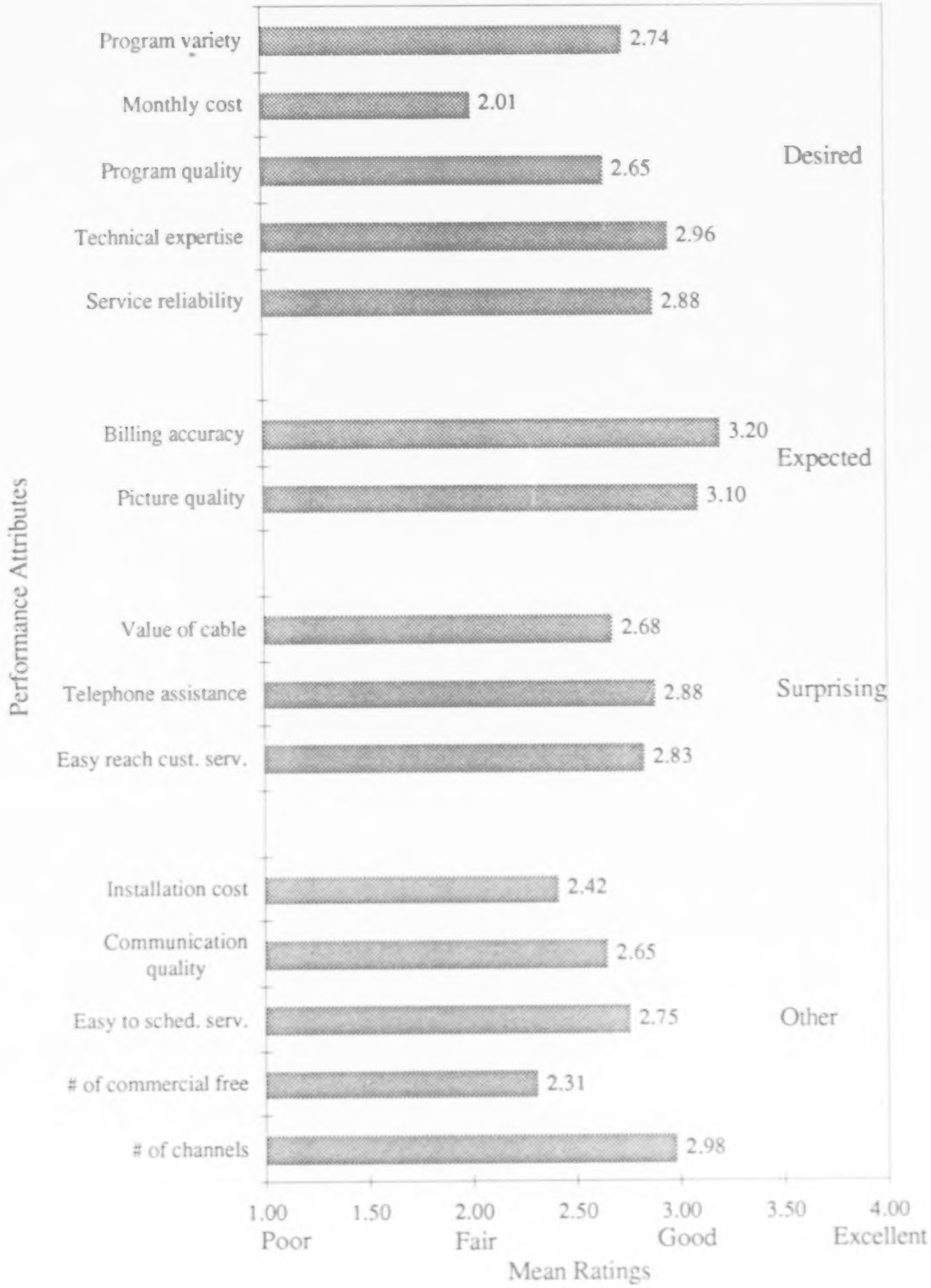


Figure 2
Cable Service Attribute Performance Ratings



Charles Kuralt, Steve Dunleavy, and the Language of Television News

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Running head: Kuralt & Dunleavy

Charles Kuralt, Steve Dunleavy, and the Language of Television News

Abstract

This paper qualitatively examines Charles Kuralt's "On the Road" reports for CBS and Steve Dunleavy's reports for *A Current Affair*. It studies the story types they specialized in, the traditions they drew upon, and the audio and visual devices they employed. In so doing, the paper tries to demonstrate the common ground shared by news genres that seem highly dissimilar. It also illustrates both television's flexibility and its limitations as a news medium.

Charles Kuralt, Steve Dunleavy, and the Language of Television News

> I have attempted to keep "relevance" and "significance" entirely out of all the stories I send back. If I come upon a real news story out there On the Road, I call some real reporter to come cover it. -- Charles Kuralt[1]

> [T]he panty-waist liberal Nazis . . . want to censor news. They want to really tell you that they shouldn't cover mass murders, they shouldn't cover any scandals, what they really should do is watch PBS more and get bored to death. -- Steve Dunleavy[2]

In many ways, they were as different as a saint is from Satan. One was beloved; one was reviled. One represented the most celebrated broadcast news organization in the country; the other was the right-hand man of Rupert Murdoch. One was called "the best writer for broadcasting that ever was"[3] and a champion of the "uncommon common man";[4] his work is preserved in a best-selling book and on home video. The other was called "a tremendously bad writer" and "the national troubadour of sex and psycho outrage";[5] his work apparently has been consigned permanently to the gutter from whence it came.

Yet they also had much in common. As their own words suggest, both saw themselves as being outside the mainstream of "real," "respectable" journalism. Both differed sharply in their physical appearances from that of the typical television reporter, yet in their own ways, they were powerful presences on screen. Both carried on journalistic storytelling traditions rooted in print, but they also mastered the unique audio-visual language of television. Both were "good soldiers" for their respective organizations but finally found themselves compelled to leave television news, in turn demonstrating the corporate pressures shaping the medium.

This paper qualitatively examines the language of Charles Kuralt's "On the Road" reports for CBS and Steve Dunleavy's reports for the tabloid program *A Current Affair*. It studies the story types they specialized in, the traditions they drew upon, and the audio and visual devices they employed. In so doing, the paper tries to demonstrate the common ground shared by genres of news that on first glance are highly dissimilar. It also illustrates both television's flexibility and its limitations as a news medium.

Background and Method

This paper adopts a cultural studies approach to journalism, which Michael Schudson says examines news "both as a set of concrete social institutions and a repertoire of historically fashioned literary practices . . . set within and in orientation to political democracy."[6] This approach seeks to uncover journalists' commonsensical understandings of what makes a good story and how it should be told, and how these understandings relate to our society and culture as a whole.[7] Scholars have used this approach to study different genres of news and to compare television with print journalism.

For example, Darnton[8] draws upon his own journalistic experience to suggest that ancient storytelling conventions powerfully influence the language of news. Manoff[9] and Schudson[10] similarly assert that the narrative forms of news shape the reporting of political events. Gans[11] argues that within these narrative forms, news celebrates certain enduring cultural values, including ethnocentrism, altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, small-town pastoralism, individualism, and moderatism. He says in this way, news helps preserve the existing moral and social order. Ettema and Glasser[12] specifically examine the form and language of investigative news stories to see how they uphold this order, while Bird[13] does the same with a study of supermarket tabloids.

Weaver argues that the language of television news differs from that of newspapers. He says although the two media use "the same themes, formulas, and symbols in constructing the lines of melodramatic action which give meaning and identity to events," television news stories are focused more tightly around single, central themes. They also are more interpretive, dominated by the personal voice of the reporter, and they depend much more on spectacle. The result is that in contrast to the "privatizing characteristics of print journalism," television news promotes "a commitment to social unity and intellectual coherence"--that is, to democratic egalitarianism as opposed to individual liberty.[14]

Others similarly have suggested that television news's traditional narrative forms reproduce social consensus and order.[15] Fiske argues that these storytelling forms are too restrictive, saying "[i]t is more important in a democracy to stimulate people into making national and international events matter in their daily lives than it is to teach them about the 'truth' of those events." He says television journalists should forfeit narrative closure in their stories in favor of "the ongoing, unresolved narrative of soap opera."[16]

Consistent with these previous cultural studies of news, this paper will examine Kuralt's and Dunleavy's news stories against the storytelling traditions of human interest and tabloid journalism. Rather than undertake a formal, quantitative content analysis, the paper will study the two men's stories as what John J. Pauly calls "integrated strategies of symbolic action."[17] It will look at the extent to which traditional journalistic story types and forms seemed to shape Kuralt's and Dunleavy's work. It also will compare the two men's work to see if certain narrative types and forms cut across journalistic genre.

In addition, the paper will examine Kuralt's and Dunleavy's stories against previous studies of television news. Following Weaver, it will look at the interpretive roles each man played in his stories and how heavily each seemed to rely on "spectacle." And it will examine the political and cultural values that each's stories seemed to promote. Because Kuralt and Dunleavy saw themselves as being outside mainstream news, it is worth exploring whether their stories deviated at all from the values found by previous studies of television and print journalism, and whether they approached the more flexible narrative model of television news advocated by Fiske.

As already noted, Kuralt's "On the Road" stories are readily available in print and on video.[18] Examples of Dunleavy's work were drawn from tapings of *A Current Affair* between September 1992 and January 1995 that were gathered as part of a broader study of tabloid television news.

Charles Kuralt[19]

The seeds of Kuralt's "On the Road" career were planted early. As a boy, he won an American Legion contest with a speech on Patrick Henry and the "Voice of Democracy"; as a newspaper reporter just out of college, he won the Ernie Pyle Memorial Award for human interest writing. Soon after, he went to New York and CBS. For a time, he was spoken of as "the next Ed Murrow," but after reporting stints in Latin America, Africa, Vietnam, and the Arctic, he decided he needed a break from hard news. In 1967, he persuaded CBS to let him go on the road and do feature stories. It would transform his career.

Years later, Kuralt would write: "I was a real reporter once, but I was not suited for it by physique or temperament."[20] Having escaped the constraints of "real" news, he sought to emulate reporters like Ernie Pyle, who, Kuralt said, "wrote plain pieces about plain people, never straining to find lofty significance in their lives, rarely analyzing them or trying to make them fit into a big picture."[21] In short, Kuralt seemed actively to try to contradict what Weaver says television journalists characteristically do--assume an omniscient air in analyzing and interpreting events, and denigrate individual differences in favor of social unity.[22]

Still, despite Kuralt's protestations to the contrary, one can find "significance" and the celebration of certain consensual values in his work. He himself once said: "I read the papers every day. The front pages were full of selfishness, arrogance and hostility toward others. The back roads were another country."[23] This contrast between the "front pages" and the "back roads" is at the heart of his brand of journalism.

Story Types. The chapter headings and tape titles within the collections of Kuralt's work show the types of stories he favors: "Unlikely Heroes," "Different Drummers," "Seasons of America," "Small Towns," "The American Heritage," "Unforgettable People," etc.[24] One Fourth of July story combines many of these types, showing a small town celebrating American heritage in the middle of summer with down-home fun. "Since everyone else at CBS is busy covering wars and scandals and Senate hearings, they leave the greased pig contests pretty much to us," Kuralt says in the story.[25]

Reportorial Presence. Kuralt contrasted himself to "real" reporters in terms of his physical appearance: "People take one look at me on their television sets and know I'm not an anchorman. On the Road, there's an advantage to being fat and bald."[26] Indeed, he is most often a friendly, rumpled presence, smiling and laughing and dressed informally in a khaki jacket or short-sleeve shirt. Yet like other television reporters, he is almost constantly on screen. He plays the tourist role which Richard Campbell has said *60 Minutes'* reporters often play--"acting as our surrogate" in "searching for authenticity by trying to recover the past [and] the natural."[27] Kuralt's benign appearance masks a powerful authority, which is most apparent when he reports on a subject which he feels demands a certain gravity. In a 1976 report from Philadelphia's Independence Hall, he delivers an eight-minute monologue reenacting the debate on independence, reciting from memory John Adams' "I have crossed the Rubicon" speech.[28] Reports like these which show off Kuralt's voice and dramatic abilities demonstrate why he was once spoken of as "the next Murrow."

Video/Audio. Unlike other television reporters, Kuralt is not concerned with events "which are spectacular and spectacularly filmed."[29] Still, his reports show careful attention to pictures and sound, and he has frequently praised his camera and sound operators for their contributions to his work.[30] One story shows an elderly farmer helping local children fly kites. Kuralt and his crew hired a fifty-foot cherry picker so that the camera could look down the string of the kite at the farmer and children below as they looked up at the sky.[31] This showed the meticulous, artful contrivance that could go into deceptively simple stories about simple folk.

Narration. One critic likened Kuralt's talents at combining pictures and "exquisitely simple, minimalist narrations" to "the shapes-and-colors perfection of a Matisse. Everything just fit."[32] A story about the Battle of Little Big Horn shows no living person other than Kuralt himself. Over video of tall grass waving in the wind, a river, and rows and rows of gravestones, he says: "There is melancholy in the wind, and sorrow in the grass, and the river--*weeps*."[33] He invokes primordial American themes in eulogizing national heroes and triumphs as well as tragedies, using repetition: "The Oregon Trail is a faint path through the sagebrush, leading westward toward the mountains. It is a hard climb over rocks, westward. It is deep ruts in soft stone carved by wagon wheels, rolling west."[34] He also celebrates seemingly trivial (yet uniquely American) things via rhyme, delighting in the names of gumballs--"Purple Poppers and Orange Chews, Powies and Zowies and Puckeroos."[35] In a story about a birch canoe maker, he recites from Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha."[36] And sometimes he lets others read "verse"--in his book, a chapter titled "Poets and Others" features those singing the praises of steam engines, trout fishing, and moonshine.[37]

Formulas. Robert Darnton, writing of his own days as a reporter, says he learned to "manipulat[e] stock sentiments and figures" in his stories.[38] Kuralt does the same, putting new spins on old formulas. Much like Darnton, who received his first byline with a story about a boy and his bike, Kuralt tells of an elderly man who checks out bikes to neighborhood youths who cannot afford to buy them.[39] He tells mystery stories, for example one about English settlers who landed on the North Carolina coast in 1588, only to disappear without a trace.[40] Sometimes Kuralt acknowledges that he is following a timeworn script, as when he introduces "the story of Frank DelVecchio, the Italian immigrant who worked hard and saved for his two sons so they could go to college and become successful so they wouldn't have to do what he does for a living. You know the story. What Frank DelVecchio does for a living is sell balloons." It turns out that his sons, both of whom have graduate degrees, are now balloon sellers too.[41]

Stories with an ironic tone or twist are a Kuralt staple. Irony is a common rhetorical device in news, and is particularly pointed in investigative journalism.[42] In Kuralt's stories, the irony is typically gentle and life-affirming, as with the DelVecchio story. Sometimes, though, it is more melancholy. In a story about the likely demise of an old mill which Kuralt clearly loves, he says: "*Of course*, there really can't be a mill like this in mid-twentieth-century America . . . *[o]f course*, such a place cannot exist."[43] And he comes close to the bitter irony of investigative reporting in a story about a federal highway inexplicably built through the mountains. Over video of blizzard conditions and cars in ditches, he says: "The signs up there say 'Interstate 80: Your Taxes at Work.' At a million dollars a mile, we thought you'd like to know how your taxes are working."[44]

Values. Gans specifically cites Kuralt's stories as examples of "small-town pastoralism" and "individualism" in journalism, promoting tradition, nature, smallness, and goodness in contrast to the "moral disorder" stories which make up so much of the news.[45] One can find other, related values in Kuralt's work:

Selflessness. Kuralt is attracted to those who give of themselves and ask little in return.[46] He constantly shows us people who declare themselves rich--in friends, family, knowledge, etc.--even though they have little money. He thus portrays material wealth as being unimportant.

Reconciliation. Kuralt seeks happy endings even to tragic stories. Sometimes he acknowledges that no such ending can be found, as with the Battle of Little Big Horn (in which Custer's fall led to the genocide of Native Americans). Other times, he finds the proverbial silver lining: The murder of Martin Luther King prompts a white woman to organize a racially-integrated group to build a park.[47] A white man's rape of a slave woman leads, eventually, to a granddaughter who becomes the first black woman priest in the Episcopal Church. ("Let's admit we [all] are related and let's get on with the business of healing these wounds," she says in the story.)[48]

Self-Improvement. Kuralt is an avowed liberal and even said in a nationally-televised interview: "What on earth did conservatism ever accomplish for our country?"[49] Yet his stories are deeply conservative in their optimistic faith in the American Dream. He introduces one story this way: "We've noticed [on the road] that while there are classes in America, there isn't much of a class system. The rich are always willing to move over, make room for one more."[50] Another story shows us an African-American sharecropper's family reuniting for Thanksgiving; the nine children left "a one-room shack in a cotton field" to become college professors, city officials, etc. When Kuralt asks how they did it, one of the children responds simply: "We worked." Kuralt ends by saying: "There are probably no lessons in any of this, but I know that in the future whenever I hear that the family is a dying institution, I'll think of them. Whenever I hear anything in America is impossible, I'll think of them."[51]

Kuralt's style of news does not adhere to the model of objective journalism. Rather, it falls within what Daniel Hallin has called the "Sphere of Consensus," which he says "encompasses those social objects not regarded by the journalists and the rest of society as controversial" and within which "the journalist's role is to serve as an advocate or celebrant of consensus values."[52] While racial and class differences are obviously highly controversial, Kuralt celebrates the consensual belief that Americans can smooth over such differences through hard work and mutual understanding. He is canny enough to recognize that we often do not live up to our highest ideals, whether it is due to historical shortsightedness, bureaucratic indifference, or plain greed and selfishness. In such cases, the melancholy and irony is most pronounced in his work. Yet he never ceases to be an advocate for these same ideals and for the common folk who embody them. In the words of one observer, Kuralt "too often causes your eyes to mist up, because the people in [his] stories are the way we want to be all the time but so rarely are: generous and compassionate."[53]

Kuralt thus makes the lessons of his stories very clear even as he denies that he is offering any. As such, he assumes the omniscient role which Weaver says is characteristic of television journalists, and occasionally he verges on what Weaver describes as "intellectual and political hubris."[54] (One critic--a Kuralt admirer--nevertheless once called him "our national windbag.")[55] Kuralt shows that television news can celebrate individual differences, eschew spectacle, and accommodate literate and stylish prose (and verse). Yet his storytelling formulas and devices are wholly consistent with journalistic tradition, as are the values his stories celebrate: They support the existing social and political order.

Steve Dunleavy[56]

Dunleavy is not nearly so well-known as Kuralt. Still, his reputation is formidable enough that he served as the model for the scoop-crazed tabloid television reporter in Oliver Stone's 1994 film *Natural Born Killers*.[57] Dunleavy was born in Australia, the son of a tabloid photographer, and he became a tabloid reporter himself while still in his teens. (Allegedly, he once slashed a car's tires to keep his father from scooping him; his father retaliated by locking him in a shed during a subsequent story.) He moved to New York in 1966 and worked for Rupert Murdoch's *Star*, writing a column which one colleague said "lashed out every week at the Commies and pinkos and pimps and perverts he just knew were scheming to take over."[58] He then served as metro editor of Murdoch's *New York Post*, producing classic headlines like "Headless Body Found in Topless Bar." In 1986, he moved to Murdoch's new syndicated television show, *A Current Affair*.

Just before that move, Dunleavy had declared of the *Post*: "We don't cater to taste, we serve taste."[59] He carried the same philosophy to *A Current Affair*, asserting that "traditional television over the years did not really in any way, shape or form approach what life is all about." In contrast, he said: "We in so-called populist television try to take a person through whatever emotions they may go through in twenty-four hours . . . disdain for their fellow man, fear of a particular situation whether it be bombings or terrorists or violence in the streets, laughter, and sometimes even sadness."[60] Dunleavy thus brought Murdoch-style tabloid news to American television.

Story Types. Murdoch himself has said he likes stories centering around "soap opera" and "high society," and fueled by what one Murdoch executive calls the "Fleet Street attitude of rebellion against social pretense."[61] These elements combine in stories like the O.J. Simpson trial--which Dunleavy declared to be the best story he had ever seen[62]--as well as in other Dunleavy reports. He recounts Howard Hughes's final, pathetic days ("the story of a man who turned into a subhuman"),[63] excoriates Prince Charles for a taped conversation with an illicit lover ("some king *he'll* make!"),[64] and mocks the marital troubles of Mia Farrow and Woody Allen ("the gonzo intellects of a hip culture").[65] Dunleavy does other stories featuring crime and sex, with titles like "Brotherhood of Blood" and "Murder, He Spoke."[66] He sometimes engages in celebrity gossip of a kinder, gentler sort, profiling the likes of Willie Nelson and Joe Pesci.[67] And he makes news himself, gaining his greatest notoriety for wrestling a bear named Caesar.[68]

Reportorial Presence. Dunleavy does not fit the cosmetic mold of a television reporter; it has been said that he carried a spare front tooth and Krazy Glue in his pocket to fill a gap in his teeth whenever he appeared on camera.[69] But he makes a strong impression with his Australian accent and his "graying pompadour, cork-tipped filter cigarettes and pinch-waist 'European' suits."[70] Like Kuralt, he is a constant narrative presence in his stories. For example, Kuralt introduced his report on the sharecropper family by strolling down the road to their house and casually resting an elbow on their mailbox. Dunleavy introduces a story in much the same way--only he strolls through a graveyard and rests his elbow on a tombstone. And he tells us not about a loving sharecropper family, but "a cruel Mafia gang called the Murder Machine . . . whose wretched victims could never, ever know the true meaning of Rest in Peace!"[71]

Video/Audio. Dunleavy does not report on spectacle; he creates it--or rather, *recreates* it. In the story about Prince Charles' phone call to his alleged lover, Dunleavy and *A Current Affair* reenact the entire conversation using actors, elaborate sets, and even a dog eyeing "Charles" as he whispers into the phone. In the Howard Hughes story, an actor portrays Hughes as he supposedly looked in his final days, complete with fake beard and a needle dangling from his arm. The story about the "cruel Mafia gang" is punctuated by "Godfather"-like music and close-ups of a revolver being fired. When we see a shower where the gang drained its victims' blood, the video appears to be tinted red.

Narration. The story titled "Murder, He Spoke" shows Dunleavy standing on a Key West street. "It was a blazing hot morning when the body of Fred Butner crashed in the grisly heat, right here at La Concha Hotel," he says. "Cops who raced to the scene were stunned. What was behind the ugly death of this upstanding member of the community? They searched his body and they found a tape recording. Later they would play it. And then they would hear Fred Butner's voice from the grave. And that voice screamed: Murder!" Small wonder, perhaps, that a critic asked: "Has Dunleavy read too much Raymond Chandler or too much Sidney Shelton, or is he just a preposterously bad writer?"[72]

Formulas. Dunleavy's purple prose and tales of crime, sex, and celebrity gossip closely follow tabloid news's traditional storytelling formulas.[73] (Indeed, they also follow the formulas of pulp fiction, as the critic quoted above suggests.) But Dunleavy's standard techniques also can be found in more respectable genres of journalism. He tells stories of innocent victims and guilty villains, for example about a boy who had been set on fire by his father.[74] Such tales of innocence and guilt are also characteristic of investigative journalism.[75] In addition, Dunleavy serves up liberal dollops of sentimentality. The story about the boy who had been set on fire shows Dunleavy drinking milkshakes with him, helping him with his skateboard, and closing by saying: "God bless you, David."[76] This sentimentality is not far removed from that in many of Kuralt's stories. And like Kuralt, Dunleavy suffuses his reports with irony. But it is much harsher and more extreme than that found even in investigative news, as when he says of Prince Charles: "Some king *he'll* make!"

Values. Dunleavy's flag-waving newspaper columns, his attacks on "liberal panty-waist Nazis," and his ties to Murdoch give a fair idea of his political views. Contemporary tabloid news is typically politically conservative.[77] Dunleavy's stories reflect these values, although sometimes in contradictory ways:

Evils of Wealth. Certainly, a reporter who excoriates wealth would not seem to be preaching conservative philosophy. But Dunleavy does it in such a way as to squelch dissatisfaction with one's lot and hence any possible challenge to the status quo. While showing us Howard Hughes's wretched last days ("he would stay in a chair or his bed for months at a time--with extremely infrequent trips to the bathroom"), Dunleavy also tells us what the lesson of it all is: "It might make you feel better about yourself, and make you bless the God above you still have to struggle for your mortgage. In other words: Thank God you're not rich!" In this, Dunleavy again follows tabloid tradition; Bird argues that "tabloids consistently preach the lesson that there is little anyone can do to change the world except hope for a miracle."[78]

Evils of Smut. Dunleavy is quick to attack sexual misconduct, particularly among those who hold an exalted place in public life. Hence he tears into Prince Charles for the taped phone conversation with the prince's alleged lover: "Frankly, the tape sounds like a disgustingly smutty conversation between two dopey adolescents. . . . And yet these are the people who think they're *better* than you and I!" He is similarly self-righteous in his treatment of Woody Allen and Mia Farrow, not to mention Michael Jackson. But like other tabloid reporters, he is much more gentle when it comes to a country music star like Willie Nelson, an icon of conservative populism rather than liberal elitism.[79] Dunleavy fawns over Nelson's womanizing: "Women? They virtually *inhale* him!"

"Ironic Knowingness". Dunleavy's moralizing appears to mask a certain cynical detachment, or what Ettema and Glasser call "ironic knowingness."[80] He revels in sordid wealth and randy celebrity even as he heaps damnation upon them. And he uses irony not just to evoke outrage, but also as a source of sick humor. For example, he follows the red-tinted video of the apartment shower where the Mafia gang bled its victims with a soundbite from a current resident of the apartment, complaining about how they had "messed up the plumbing." Although Dunleavy claimed to practice "populist television," he does not appear in his stories

to be motivated by a sincere faith in people, as Kuralt is. He seems motivated merely by a desire to produce what the market will bear, to shape the raw materials of his stories into standard molds. "It's not a profession," he said of journalism. "It's a craft. We're the same as carpenters or mechanics."[81]

Dunleavy does show that television news can make room for unconventional faces, voices, and demeanors. ("At least Dunleavy's no goddamn TV clone," said Jimmy Breslin. "He's got that 'fuck you' attitude, and I love it.")[82] Furthermore, in embracing elements of soap opera and allowing "ironic knowingness" to undercut the "hubris" of his work, he perhaps approaches the more open and less didactic model of television news called for by Fiske--at least, that is what one could argue.[83]

Still, it is a stretch to call a tabloid traditionalist like Dunleavy an original or a visionary. His work falls within what Hallin describes as the "Sphere of Deviance," in which the journalist "plays the role of exposing, condemning, or excluding from the public agenda those who violate or challenge the political consensus."[84] While it is true that Dunleavy rarely if ever covers politics *per se*, his stories do play a political role. Shoemaker and Reese argue that the "media help maintain the boundaries of social order by showing what is approved and not approved. Deviant people and events may be trivialized or shown as dangerous."[85] Hence, in telling sensational (if ironic) stories of the rich and smutty, Dunleavy shows himself to be a political reactionary, belying cultural conservatives' charges that tabloid television is subversive.

Institutional Pressures

As of this writing, Charles Kuralt is planning an epic poem about Lewis and Clark, and Steve Dunleavy is writing fiery newspaper columns calling the *New York Times* "'the Scarlot Harlot of Times Square.'"[86] Both apparently have departed television news for good. Kuralt left voluntarily in 1994. He compared his tenure at CBS News to a love affair, saying: "I woke up one morning and realized I didn't love her anymore."[87] Dunleavy was forced off *A Current Affair* the following year as the show fought vainly to upgrade its image, boost its ratings, and save itself from cancellation. Rupert Murdoch sent Dunleavy back to the *New York Post*.

Kuralt's and Dunleavy's departures illustrate the corporate pressures on television news. In large part, Kuralt was allowed to produce his "On the Road" pieces because they helped CBS's image. Their gentle, all-American lyricism counterbalanced the stories of foreign and domestic strife that dominated the news in the 1960s and 1970s, and helped blunt charges that the network was too negative and too liberal.[88] Kuralt remained at CBS News through more than a decade of massive layoffs and budget cuts, a time during which he was unceremoniously dumped from a couple of anchor jobs.[89] It is perhaps no surprise that he finally "fell out of love."

Dunleavy originally was sent to *A Current Affair* to help

Murdoch establish himself in the American television market.[90] Once that mission was accomplished and the program had outlived its usefulness (i.e., had stopped generating big ratings), Dunleavy was booted back to a much lower-profile newspaper job. He apparently went quietly. "The only bosses are the public," he once said. "That's who runs my life, next to Rupert Murdoch."[91] The lesson of Kuralt and Dunleavy seems to be that idiosyncratic voices are tolerated in television news only so long as they help turn a profit or otherwise serve corporate interests.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has not been to argue that Charles Kuralt and Steve Dunleavy were equals in terms of journalistic quality or ethics. Simply put, Kuralt took the high road and Dunleavy took the low, which makes it entirely appropriate that we honor Kuralt and dishonor Dunleavy. Nevertheless, this paper has tried to show how the language of news is always shaped and limited by storytelling traditions and institutional constraints, and how this is especially true of television news.

Weaver argues that television news is potentially "far more flexible and intellectually accommodating" than newspaper news, in that it is "more 'interpretive,' less constrained by the daily flow of events, and less committed to the newspaper's narrow, one-day-only perspective in time."[92] Both Kuralt and Dunleavy demonstrated that flexibility, literally straying from the beaten path of daily journalism to present dramatically contrasting visions of American life--Kuralt with his tales of simple decency, Dunleavy with his tales of depraved debauchery. Both men responded creatively (if not always ethically, in Dunleavy's case) to television's demand for arresting pictures and sound. In a largely homogenous world of pretty faces and voices, they stood out.

Still, both were bound by tradition and by the institutions for which they worked. They drew upon a common set of what Schudson calls "assumptions about narrative, storytelling, human interest, and . . . photographic and linguistic presentation."[93] Both followed familiar formulas and used irony and sentiment. Both were conservative voices calling for adherence to traditional values. Both were ultimately beholden to corporate interests. In the cutthroat world of television news in the 1990s, both ended up as relics.

Neither fully realized Fiske's vision of a truly popular brand of television news, popular in the sense of making the news genuinely matter in people's daily lives. However, they did call attention to the promise and peril of that vision--the promise that distinctive, individual voices can find places in television, and the peril that such voices will give way to a pseudo-popular news offering nothing more than flash and sleaze. As such, Charles Kuralt and Steve Dunleavy bear remembering as television news struggles to define itself in the coming century.

Notes

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2. *The Charlie Rose Show*, WNET-TV, 15 February 1994.

3. Jeff Greenfield, "Goodbye to Best Writer in Broadcasting," *Dayton Daily News*, 18 March 1994, p. 10A.

4. Quoted in Kuralt, *On the Road*, ii.

5. Pope Brock, "Steve Dunleavy: Quick with a Buck and a Fist, *A Current Affair's* Nervy Aussie Never Met a Story Too Lurid to Love," *People*, 7 June 1993, 124, 120.

6. Michael Schudson, *The Power of News* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 2. See also James W. Carey, "Editor's Introduction: Taking Culture Seriously," in *Media, Myths, and Narratives: Television and the Press*, ed. James W. Carey (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1988), 8-18.

7. Michael Schudson, "The Sociology of News Revisited," in *Mass Media and Society*, ed. James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (London: Edward Arnold, 1991), 151-155; Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge* (NY: Basic Books, 1983), 73-93; Richard Campbell, 60 Minutes *and the News* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 9-13.

8. Robert Darnton, "Writing News and Telling Stories,"

Daedalus 104 (spring 1975): 175-193. See also S. Elizabeth Bird and Robert W. Dardenne, "Myth, Chronicle, and Story: Exploring the Narrative Qualities of News," in *Media, Myths, and Narratives: Television and the Press*, ed. James W. Carey (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1988), 67-86.

9. Robert Karl Manoff, "Writing the News (By Telling the 'Story')," in *Reading the News*, ed. Robert Karl Manoff and Michael Schudson (NY: Pantheon Books, 1986), 197-229.

10. Schudson, *Power of News*, 53-71.

11. Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News* (NY: Random House, 1979), 39-69.

12. James S. Ettema and Theodore L. Glasser, "Narrative Form and Moral Force: The Realization of Innocence and Guilt Through Investigative Journalism," *Journal of Communication* 38 (summer 1988), 8-26; Theodore L. Glasser and James S. Ettema, "Investigative Journalism and the Moral Order," in *Critical Perspectives on Media and Society*, ed. Robert K. Avery and David Eason (NY: Guilford, 1991), 203-225; James S. Ettema and Theodore L. Glasser, "The Irony in--and of--Journalism: A Case Study in the Moral Language of Liberal Democracy," *Journal of Communication* 44 (spring 1994), 5-28.

13. S. Elizabeth Bird, *For Enquiring Minds* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

14. Paul H. Weaver, "Newspaper News and Television News," in *Enduring Issues in Mass Communication*, ed. Everette E. Dennis, Arnold H. Ismach, and Donald M. Gillmor (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co., 1978), 224, 231, 232.

15. See for example Robert Rutherford Smith, "Mythic Elements in Television News," *Journal of Communication* 29 (winter 1979), 75-82; Richard C. Vincent, Bryan K. Crow, and Dennis K. Davis, "When Technology Fails: The Drama of Airline Crashes in Network Television News," *Journalism Monographs* 117 (November 1989); Campbell, 60 Minutes *and the News*.

16. John Fiske, *Reading the Popular* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 196-197, 195.

17. John J. Pauly, "A Beginner's Guide to Doing Qualitative Research in Mass Communication," *Journalism Monographs* 125 (February 1991), 4.

18. Kuralt, *On the Road; The Best of On the Road with Charles Kuralt*, prod. CBS News, three videocassettes, 60 min. each ("The American Heritage," "Seasons of America," "Unforgettable People"), CBS Video/Fox Video, 1989/1993.

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xii; Gary Paul Gates, *Air Time: The Inside Story of CBS News* (NY: Harper & Row, 1978), 173-177.

20. Kuralt, *On the Road*, xv.

21. Kuralt, "Foreword," xi.

22. Weaver, "Newspaper News."

23. Kuralt, *A Life On the Road*, 167.

24. Kuralt, *On the Road; Best of On the Road*.

25. *Best of On the Road*, "Seasons of America."

26. Kuralt, *On the Road*, xvi.

27. Campbell, 60 Minutes, 96.

28. Kuralt, *On the Road*, 305-308; *Best of On the Road*, "The American Heritage."

29. Weaver, "Newspaper News," 230.

30. See for example Kuralt, *A Life on the Road*, 173-187.

31. Kuralt, *On the Road*, 249-252; Kuralt, *A Life on the Road*, 178.

32. Howard Rosenberg, "A Toast for Kuralt and One for the Road," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 April 1994, p. F1.

33. Kuralt, *On the Road*, 321-323; *Best of On the Road*, "The American Heritage."

34. Kuralt, *On the Road*, 318; *Best of On the Road*, "The American Heritage."

35. Kuralt, *On the Road*, 121.

36. Kuralt, *On the Road*, 57-59; *Best of On the Road*, "Unforgettable People."

37. Kuralt, *On the Road*, 85-130.

38. Darnton, "Writing News," 191.

39. Kuralt, "On the Road," 9-13; *Best of On the Road*, "Unforgettable People."

40. *Best of On the Road*, "The American Heritage."

41. Kuralt, *On the Road*, 280-282.

42. Theodore L. Glasser and James S. Ettema, "When the Facts Don't Speak for Themselves: A Study of the Use of Irony in Daily Journalism," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication 10* (December 1993): 322-338; Ettema and Glasser, "The Irony in--and of--Journalism."

43. Kuralt, *On the Road*, 268-269.

44. *Best of On the Road*, "Seasons of America."

45. Gans, *Deciding What's News*, 48-51, 56-62, 156; see also Campbell, 60 Minutes, 137-157.

46. See for example Kuralt, *On the Road*, 1-38; *Best of On the Road*, "Unforgettable People."

47. Kuralt, *On the Road*, 292-295.

48. Kuralt, *On the Road*, 31.

49. *Charles Kuralt: One for the Road*, CBS, 4 May 1994.

50. Kuralt, *On the Road*, 66.

51. Kuralt, *On the Road*, 350-353; *Best of On the Road*, "Unforgettable People." Kuralt told an interviewer that this story moved him and his crew to tears (*Charles Kuralt: One for the Road*).

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53. Quoted in Kuralt, *On the Road*, back cover.

54. Weaver, "Newspaper News," 229.

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64. *A Current Affair*, 1 February 1993.

65. *A Current Affair*, 18 November 1992.

66. *A Current Affair*, 10 September 1992, 19 November 1992.

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The Role of News Teasers in Processing of TV News

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The Role of News Teasers in Processing of TV News

Abstract

This study examined the effect of the news teaser on viewers' processing of TV news. The results showed that the presence of a news teaser enhanced viewers' recall and comprehension of the news story being teased. In addition, the effectiveness of different types of news teasers was also explored: the presence of program reference in a news teaser was found more effective in facilitating viewers' comprehension of the news, while the presentation format of a news teaser did not make a difference.

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The Role of News Teaser in Processing of TV News

Introduction

Channel 9 local news in Central New York (WIXT, ABC affiliate) has a segment titled "After Oprah" in its early evening daily newscasts, that is a news story with a similar theme related to the preceding program "Oprah Winfrey Show". It is featured and promoted in advance with a view to carry "Oprah" viewers over to the following local newscast. Part of the carry over process involves news teasers, which are inserted in the commercial breaks of the program. These teasers are usually presented in visuals and related to the topics discussed in the program to achieve the relevance between the program and the local newscasts. For example, if teenage pregnancy is the topic of "Oprah Winfrey Show", a news story about local teenage pregnancy problem will be featured in the local newscast, and a news teaser containing a visual clip from the news story emphasizing connections between the show topic and the news story will be used to promote the local newscast. Without doubt, the news teasers are employed to serve as cues for the up-coming news stories and appeal to viewers' sustained interest from the preceding program. Interest may be an important factor for viewers' viewing selection, but it does not guarantee learning or retention of the information. Since TV is the most recognized source for news (Comstock, 1989), it is important to make TV newscasts more comprehensible and memorable for the public.

The effectiveness of the newscast in enhancing viewers' information learning has long been an area for research, and an extensive amount of literature has been devoted to exploring different types of presentation features that may facilitate or improve the information learning of TV news. Nevertheless, little research has been done to examine the effect of the by-product of newscasts--news teasers, which raises the following questions: Can the findings of newscast research be applied to news teasers? Can a 15-second news teaser make a difference in facilitating or improving viewers' information processing? If it does, are specific types of news teasers more effective than others? In order to answer these questions, this study thus explored the role of news teasers in processing of TV news, as well as examined the effectiveness of different types of news teasers in improving viewers' information retention and understanding.

Relevant Literature and Theoretical Framework

A. Previous research

In a news teaser, the news anchor describes or previews an upcoming news item to captivate audience interest. Appealing to viewers interest may be news producers' major concern, however, facilitating and improving viewers' processing of news should be their inherent obligation. After all, the ultimate function of newscasts is to inform the public of events and provide them with relevant facts. Therefore, beside enticing viewers to stay turn for an upcoming story, a news teaser should also serve an informative function. To find out whether news teasers achieve this intention, Schleuder and White (1989) studied news teasers embedded in the newscast segments of NBC, CBS and ABC news and found that viewers "paid more moment to moment attention to news stories that had been teased." In addition, viewers also remembered the verbal aspects of the teased news stories better than those of stories that had not been teased.

Schleuder and White's (1989) study is one of the few studies that examine the effects of news teasers. Cameron, Schleuder and Thorson (1991) explored the effect of news teasers in processing of commercials. They found that news teasers moderately enhance the effect of segmenting commercial breaks into discrete units that then evidence a primacy effect for the verbal recognition of the first commercial and a recency effect for the visual recognition of the last commercial. The other study which is more related to processing of TV news examines the priming effects of news bumpers and teasers on viewers' attention and memory of the news stories (Schleuder, White & Cameron, 1993). The authors found that news stories that were teased or double-primed by bumpers and teasers elicited more attention than stories that were not primed by bumpers or teasers. In addition, the verbal information in news stories primed by bumpers and teasers was remembered better.

All these studies advanced our knowledge in the cognitive effects of news teasers (or news previews), especially in terms of viewers' attention and memory performances. However, some limitation and overlooked areas from these previous studies demanded further exploration on this topic. First, all three studies created simulated newscasts with news items recorded off-air. Although real newscasts provided a sense of authenticity, it also introduced some confounding variable such as prior exposure into the attention and recognition tasks. In addition, comparing stories being teased (primed) with different stories not being teased (primed) risked other confoundings such as interest level, news content and serial position. Based on this premise, the first objective of this study was to reexamine the effects of news teasers on viewers' processing of TV news with an attempt to avoid the above-mentioned intervening variables.

Upon reexamination of the effects of news teasers, this study also established its originality by developing a different experimental design and testing different cognitive effects. The previous studies (Schleuder & White, 1989, Schleuder, White & Cameron, 1993, Cameron, Schleuder & Thorson, 1991) explored the effects of the news teasers occurred at the beginning of newscasts or embedded in the newscasts right before the commercial breaks, while this study examined the teaser embedded in the commercial break of the program preceding the newscast. In addition, this study tested comprehension instead of attention because it was considered a more direct measurement in assessing program effectiveness. It is argued that how much sense one makes out of the news information for future reference or decision making is more relevant to the inherent importance of TV news than the degree of mental intensity one has when viewing the newscasts. Moreover, the previous studies examined human memory from two different aspects, visual and verbal, while this study treated it as a whole. There is plenty of evidence in cognitive psychological research that people process visual and verbal aspects of a message separately, especially when these two aspects are not consistent with each other. However, a holistic examination of visual and verbal processing was considered productive since the coverage of TV newscasts normally emphasizes the redundancy between audio and video messages (Son, Reese and Davie, 1987).

In addition to the cognitive effects of the news teaser, this study also focused on the effectiveness of different types of news teasers, which constituted the second objective of the research. Therefore, this study manipulated both the presence of program reference (presence vs absence) and the variation of presentation format (anchor vs newsclip) to assess the cognitive effectiveness of four different types of news teasers on viewers' recall and comprehension of the TV news.

B. Repetition and organization

Empirical evidence shows that repeated exposure can improve people's performance in recall tasks (Anderson, 1991). Repetition allows practice and in turn facilitates learning and retrieval of learned information (Baddeley, 1990). Although the combination of program, related teasers and news story are not really the repeated message, the recurring theme across the program and the news story which is emphasized by the teaser will probably achieve the similar effect of repetition and make the following recall task easier. Additional evidence from information processing theory can also be used to support this argument--the use of organization. It has been long proven that organizing material improves subjects' learning process and enables them to do a systematic search later, which consequentially facilitates the recall task (Tulving, 1962, Baddeley, 1990). The recurring theme should be able to form a mental map or facilitate the use of the method of loci (e.g., Christen & Bjork, 1976; Ross & Lawrence, 1968) which can promote a good organization strategy in recall situations. By providing and emphasizing the associative relationship across programs for the viewers, program-referred teasers will therefore conciliate viewers' mental effort in organizing and retrieving information; and thus lead to higher recall.

C. Priming effect and schema theory

In Schleuder, White and Cameron's (1993) study, priming was used as the main construct to explain the effects of news previews on viewers' attention and memory. According to Berkowitz and Rogers (1986), priming is a natural part of the spreading activation process: "for some time after a concept is activated, there is an increased probability that it and associated thought elements will come to mind again, creating what has been termed a priming effect." Based on this definition, this study contends that use of program reference in a news teaser will enhance the spreading activation process because the association between the program and the teased news story is emphasized. This in turn reduces viewers' mental effort for spreading activation. In other words, if the viewers' interest can be sustained throughout the program, the activated thought elements will remain active and ready for future application. In this sense, program-referred teasers should demonstrate a stronger priming effect on viewers' recall task. Furthermore, applying this process into the context of schematic processing will also generate a similarly promising expectation for viewers' comprehension performance.

Schema is a model or prototype by which people internalize, structure and make sense of an event (Bartlett, 1932; Baddeley, 1990; O'Sullivan, Hartely, Saunders, Montgomery & Fiske, 1994). It helps people to facilitate the processing of new information, especially the comprehension task, based on the existing knowledge. The new is made to fit the pattern of the familiar. Representation or inference will be made out of the concepts or message more easily because of the existing schemas. Since schemata are designed to facilitate making inferences about the concepts (Anderson, 1991), the recurring theme across the program and the news story will foster a unit of readily available schemata or form a story script that will decrease the mental effort needed for this fitting or inference-making process. Program-referred news teasers will serve as a cue to enhance the effect by emphasizing the connection between the program and the up-coming news story. Therefore, program-referred teasers are expected to facilitate the understanding of the teased news story and result in better comprehension.

D. Picture superiority effect

Previous studies on the presentation format of news stories have shown that viewers are better able to learn from the news stories presented in action visuals than in talking-head form (Brosius, 1991; Findahl, 1981; Gunter, 1980). Visuals also lead to better comprehension if they fit the accompanying text (Reese, 1984; Dew & Cadwell, 1985; Son, Reese & Davie, 1987; Brosius, 1989). It has been argued that visuals are able to provide a stronger cue for schematic processing and facilitate semantic processing, which will improve the subjects' comprehension and recall tasks. Based on these findings, this study proposes that the same kind of picture superiority effect can be found in the news teasers as well. Therefore, news teasers presented in action visuals are expected to be more effective than in talking-head form.

Based on the findings of the previous studies in communications and information processing theories derived from cognitive psychology, this study proposed four hypotheses to test the cognitive effects of news teasers on viewers' processing of TV news:

H1: The presence of a news teaser in the commercial break of the program preceding the newscast will enhance viewers' recall of the news story being teased.

H2: The presence of a news teaser in the commercial break of the program preceding the newscast will enhance viewers' comprehension of the news story being teased.

H3: Based on the interaction effect of program reference and presentation format, the order of the effectiveness of the different types of news teasers on viewers' recall of the news story being teased is as follows: program-referred news teaser with visual, program-referred teaser with talking-head, non-program-referred teaser with visual, and non-program-referred teaser with talking-head.

H4: Based on the interaction effect of program reference and presentation format, the order of the effectiveness of the different types of news teasers on viewers' comprehension of the news story being teased is as follows: program-referred news teaser with visual, program-referred teaser with talking-head, non-program-referred teaser with visual, and non-program-referred teaser with talking-head.

Method

A. Design

The study was fielded in April, 1995 using a 2 x 2 factorial design to manipulate two independent variables, program reference and presentation format. Program reference was defined as reference made in the news teasers to establish the relevance between the program and the up-coming news story by emphasizing the related themes, topics, issues or subjects, as well as the consecutive relationship between the program and the newscast, in which the teased news story is being featured. Presentation format was referred to the way a news teaser is presented, either with the use of film (visual) or with an anchorperson delivering the message (talking-head). Four types of teasers were therefore produced-- 1) program-referred news teaser with visual, 2) program-referred teaser with talking-head, 3) non-program referred teaser with visual, and 4) non-program- referred teaser with talking-head.

Two dependent variables, recall and comprehension, were used to examine the cognitive effects of news teasers. Recall was defined as the degree of retrieval of the factual information presented in the news story and was measured by asking three multiple-choice questions on the specific facts presented in the news story being teased. Comprehension was defined as one's ability to make proper inferences which go beyond the factual information provided in the story. It was measured by asking three multiple-choice questions about the central points inferred from the facts presented in the story being teased.

Six multiple-choice questions were designed to measure subjects' recall and comprehension of the story being teased. There was only one correct or proper response for each question. Therefore, one point was assigned to each correct answer, while zero point was assigned to incorrect and "don't know" answers.

Recall index and comprehension index ranged from 0 to 3 was thus created for each subject.

B. Pretest

A telephone survey was conducted to find out target subjects' interests in various local TV news topics in order to avoid the possible confounding of subjects' interest in their recall and comprehension performances. Based on the actual breakdown of freshmen from a northeastern university's communication program by gender (50% male vs. 50% female), 22 female and 22 male freshmen were randomly sampled from the university telephone directory and interviewed, with a 68% response rate.

Two screening questions (Have you watched local TV news regularly and have you watched any local TV news last week?) were asked to identify representative local TV news viewers. Respondents were asked to rate their interest on 12 news topics on a interest scale ranging from 1 to 5 (where 1 means not at all interested and 5 means very interested). Three topics with mid to low interest ratings were considered as categories for news stories selection to eliminate effect of high news interest bias. They were Business & Economy (3.0), Health & Medicine (2.9), and Local Community (2.8). Although Fashion got the lowest rating (2.1), it was discarded because there was a significant correlation between respondents' gender and interest (r=-.4852, p<.01).

C. Stimulus Materials

News stories produced by Broadcasting Journalism graduate students in the program were selected to compose the newscast for the experiment in order to reduce the possibility of prior exposure. Under the considerations of timeliness, proximity, production quality and pre-selected news topics, three news stories, AIDS Exhibit, Senior Citizen Shopping Bus, and Fire Department Job Cuts, were selected. A professional announcer from a local radio station was recruited to play the role of anchorperson. Four types of news teasers were produced to tease the treatment news story, Senior Citizen Shopping Bus. The difference between the program-referred and non-program-referred teasers are as follows:

Program-referred teaser
Next on "Daybreak", Channel 3 News will take a in-depth look at the problem facing ***senior citizens*** in Syracuse. Will the cutback in Centro eliminate special services provided for ***the elderly*** ? Details up next after today's special presentation ***"Can't Afford to Grow Old"***.

Non-program referred teaser
Coming up next on Channel 3 News "Daybreak", budget cuts force Centro to re-evaluate some special services. How will these changes affect your ridership? Details straight ahead on "Daybreak".

The news story was placed at the second pod of the newscast to avoid primacy and recency effects. An emotional docu-drama, "Can't Afford to Grow Old", which contained a related theme to the teased news story and was expected to elicit high interest from viewers was included as the program. Two 30-second commercials recorded off-air were also used as part of the stimulus material. The final versions of the stimulus material for the four treatment groups were presented in the following order, program (1st half)--commercials--teaser--program (2nd half)--newscast. The only difference among the four treatment versions was the different types of teasers, and the only different between treatment and control versions was the presence and absence of the teaser. The length of each version ranged around 17 minutes with several seconds difference depending on the presence of the news teaser in the stimulus and that of the program reference in the teaser.

D. Data Collection

Subjects were 131 freshmen currently enrolled in the two sections of an introductory communication course. They were randomly assigned into five groups (4 treatment and 1 control groups) and then taken to separate rooms for viewing the stimulus. They were told that the purpose of the study was to find out freshmen's news viewing behavior. This procedure was done to prevent their deliberate attentiveness to the newscast and try to create an incidental learning situation in which learning of information was not emphasized. Subjects were asked not to talk to each other during the viewing session. After the viewing session, they were asked to fill out a questionnaire designed to measure their interest, recall and comprehension, as well as to collect information on subjects' gender, age, viewing habits, and comments on the program and the newscast. The experiment took 22 minutes on average. Subjects were debriefed and rewarded with extra credits for participation.

E. Data Analysis

The mean score of the recall and comprehension indexes for each group was computed and independent t-test was performed to test the significance of the difference between the treatment and control groups. In addition, a two-way analysis of variance was applied to examine the effectiveness of program reference, presentation format and the interaction of these two variables. Descriptive statistics were also used to compute subjects' background information, such as age, gender composition and local TV news viewing habits.

Results

The mean age of the experiment subjects (N=131) was 18.95. The majority of them (51.7%) rarely watched local TV news (less than 1/2 hour a day), followed by a sizable portion (23.7%) who did not watch at all. Moreover, only 13% of the subjects watched Channel 3 (WSTM) local news, from which the experimental stimulus was simulated. The data show that most of the subjects had limited experience in viewing local TV news, which decreased the possibility that they would question the authenticity of the simulated newscast. As a matter of fact, there were 15.3% of the subjects who gave negative feedback on the newscast and anchorperson, but only 5.3% of them questioned the authenticity of the newscast. Although there were more female than male subjects in the experiment (54.2% vs. 45.8%) due to voluntary participation, further statistical analysis showed that there was no significant correlation between subjects' gender and their recall and comprehension performances (r=.043 and .002, respectively). Interest ratings for each news story were also checked to validate the results of the telephone survey. Although there were some variations between the survey and experiment results (see Table 1), the latter still ranged from mid to low interest ratings on a 1 to 5 scale. Therefore, these variations should not have caused any problem. As far as the other interest rating is concerned, the program was rated as high interest on average (mean=4.0) and there was a significant correlation between the program and the teased news story (r=.5932, p<.01).

Table 1 about here

The results of the t-tests applied to examine the effects of news teasers on recall and comprehension of the teased news story show that the mean scores of the recall and comprehension indices for the treatment groups are significantly higher than those of the control group (see Table 2). Therefore, hypothesis 1 and 2, which predicted positive impacts of the news teaser on recall and comprehension, were both supported.

Table 2 about here

Two-way analyses of variance were used to compare the effectiveness of the four types of news teasers, based on the effects of program reference, presentation format and the interaction of these two variables, on recall and comprehension. As the result shows in Table 3, none of the variables made any significant difference on viewers' recall performance. Hypothesis 3, therefore, was rejected.

Table 3 about here

Unlike recall, the analysis on comprehension had mixed findings. Although the variation of presentation format did not cause significant difference in viewers' comprehension performance, the presence of program reference in the teasers were proven to be more effective in enhancing viewers' comprehension of the news story (F[1,105]=5.99, p<.05). In addition, the interaction effect between program reference and presentation format was also present (F[2, 105]=3.37, p<.05). Hypothesis 4 was partially supported (see Table 4).

Table 4 about here

Discussion

Findings

As expected, 1) the presence of a news teaser enhanced viewers' recall and comprehension of the news story being teased; 2) the presence of program reference in the news teaser demonstrated a significant effect on viewers' comprehension. However, 3) no effect was found for presentation format. Research shows that a rapid loss of information about "surface feature" of presentation occurs readily when the context where learning takes places is similar to that of previous learning episodes (Weiberg, 1980; Dodd and White, 1980). Although previous studies about the presentation format of the news stories found a picture superiority effect on viewers' information learning, the variation of presentation format doesn't seem to make a difference through news teasers. It is possible that news teaser is too short for the picture superiority effect to occur. Therefore, the use of visuals becomes a "surface feature" that viewers are not able to code in the time given. It is also possible that picture superiority effect is only limited within the message that is featured. In other words, it may be a "surface feature" that is not strong enough to develop a spreading activation as proposed by Berkowitz and Rogers (1986). On the other hand, the presence of program reference bridges the similar learning context from the preceding program to the newscast, which facilitates viewers' information processing because of the readily available schemata remained from the previous similar learning episode. If this is the case, why does the presence of program reference only work for comprehension but not for recall task? One possible explanation may be inferred from the difference that these two variables were defined and operationalized. Recall performance depended on the correct retrieval of the specific facts presented in the news story, which were only stated once. The similar recurring theme facilitated the retrieval of existing schemata, which led to easier comprehension of new information. Remembering specific details, on the other hand, requires rehearsal and repeated practices. Recurring theme doesn't mean repeated message or information, therefore, its cognitive effect may be not strong enough to boost memory. The other possible explanation is based on the nature of TV news processing. The encoding of news material may involve primarily semantic abstraction into existing knowledge structures rather than surface or episodic features. Therefore, requests to recall specific facts may therefore be relatively ineffectual.

Basically, the results of this study indicate that using a news teaser can enhance TV news viewers' overall recall and comprehension of the news story being teased. The results, which confirm news teasers' positive effect on recall as it was found in previous studies (Schleuder and White, 1989; Schleuder, White & Cameron, 1993), and also provide some new insight to the research on improvement of newscast effectiveness. First, news teasers, even being placed at a more distant location as they were in this study, are still effective in improving viewers' retention of the news item being teased. Second, news teasers, especially program-referred ones, can facilitate viewers' processing of information and lead to a better comprehension of the news story being teased. This finding is important both to broadcasting industry and education because that TV news is regarded as the most frequently used sources for news (Comstock, 1989) and its effectiveness on viewers' information learning has been a long-time concern.

Program-referred news teasers are used mainly to appeal audience's sustained interest from the preceding program to the newscast. Their impact in improving viewers' comprehension is actually an unintended fringe benefit. With this specific type of teasers, the news media will be able to establish their commercial intention and at the same time better serve their inherent obligation to the public as information senders. In addition, program-referred teasers may be used to enhance the effect of agenda-setting. They will enable the audience to better understand news media's message and strengthen the connection of the recurring theme across program genre, as well as increase the chances that viewers will be primed with certain repetitive issues and agenda.

Limitations of the study

First, artificiality--this study employed simulated news teasers and newscast instead of naturally occurring ones off the air. Although they were carefully produced and edited to make them look as realistic as possible, the quality was still inferior to the those produced by professional news media. However, only 5.3% of the subjects questioned the authenticity of the newscast and further statistical analysis showed that there was no relationship between subjects' negative feedback and their recall and comprehension (r=-.1155 and -.0009, respectively). Therefore, the study's results still hold. The other limitation, weak external validity, is quite common to most experiments--TV news viewing of this study occurred in a laboratory setting, which is quite different from the natural viewing environments. However, efforts have been made to establish incidental learning by directing subjects' attention to their viewing preference in the beginning of the viewing session. As a matter of fact, judging from their comments on the program and newscast at the end of the questionnaire, a sizable portion of subjects still have not figured out the real purpose of the study even after answering all those questions testing their recall and comprehension. The other factor affecting the external validity of the study is the sample of homogeneous student subjects. This decision was made due to limited accessibility to and availability of experimental subjects. However, the pool of freshmen may be the best choice in an academic setting. As a recent statistic shows that the median years of school completed by U.S. citizens is 12.7 (Kominski, 1991) and freshmen are very close to this U.S. education median.

Suggestions for future research

This study established that a single news teaser enhanced viewers' recall and comprehension of news. However, news teasers are usually presented repetitively at different locations. Therefore, it will be worthwhile to look into the effect of the repeated exposure to news teasers. Will the impact be strengthened because of the repetition, especially for recall tasks? In addition, would news teaser's location: the beginning of the program, the commercial break of the program, the end of the program or the commercial break of the newscast, influence recall and comprehension? And which location would be able to provide the optimal impact? Another research approach may be taken to examine the relationship between the news teaser and the serial position (primacy and recency) of the news story in the newscast on recall and comprehension. Research can also be done to examine viewers' perception of the news story teased by the program-referred teaser. Will the nature or genre of the preceding program (e.g. entertaining vs. informative) influence viewers' perception of the importance of the teased news story? Finally, since most of the time a news teaser appears in the end of a commercial pod, will it cause any negative effect on the processing of the advertisements preceded it because of retroactive interference?

Based on the findings of this study, news teasers seem to contribute to mental strategies of information processing, specifically the continuation of the flow of information and retrieval of existing schemata. Some progress has been made in understanding how viewers process television news. However, a lot of research still remains to be done to understand the effects of news teasers.

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Table 1. Comparison of interest ratings between survey results and experiment results

	Survey Results Mean (SD)	Experiment Results Mean (SD)
Health & Medicine	2.9 (1.1)	3.1 (1.1)
Local Community	2.8 (1.1)	2.9 (1.1)
Business & Economy	3.0 (1.3)	2.3 (1.1)
	(N=30)	(N=131)

Table 2. Independent t-tests for recall/comprehension by group (teaser vs. no teaser)

Variables	Teaser Means (SD) (N=107)	No Teaser Means (SD) (N=24)	t value	Significance
Recall	1.67 (.79)	1.21 (.66)	-3.01	p<.01
Comprehension	1.25 (.72)	.96 (.55)	-2.23	p<.05

Table 3. Two-way analysis of variance of the recall index by program reference, presentation format and interaction of program reference & presentation format

Variables		Recall Index N	Mean	F	df	sig.
Program	(PR)	55	1.80			
Reference	(NPR)	52	1.54	2.55	1	n.s.
Presentation	(V)	55	1.78			
Format	(TH)	52	1.56	1.74	1	n.s.
2-way	(PRV)	31	1.84			
Interactions	(PRTH)	24	1.75			
Prog x Pres.	(NPRV)	24	1.71	2.39	2	n.s.
	(NPRTH)	28	1.39			

PR: Program-referred
PRV: Program-referred with visual
V: Visual
TH: Talking-head
PRV: Program-referred with visual
PRTH: Program-referred with talking-head
NPRV: Non-program-referred with visual
NPRTH: Non-program-referred with talking-head

Table 4. Two-way analysis of variance of the comprehension index by program reference, presentation format and interaction of program reference & presentation format

		Comprehension Index			
Variables		N	Mean	F	df	sig.
Program	(PR)	55	1.42			
Reference	(NPR)	52	1.08	5.99	1	p<.05
Presentation	(V)	55	1.31			
Format	(TH)	52	1.19	.37	1	n.s.
2-way	(PRV)	31	1.48			
Interactions	(PRTH)	24	1.33			
Prog. x Pres.	(NPRV)	24	1.08	3.37	2	P<.05
	(NPRTH)	28	1.07			

PR: Program-referred
PRV: Program-referred with visual
V: Visual
TH: Talking-head
PRV: Program-referred with visual
PRTH: Program-referred with talking-head
NPRV: Non-program-referred with visual
NPRTH: Non-program-referred with talking-head

Riding the Airwaves:

Three Models of Women's Access to Broadcasting

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"Riding the Airwaves"

Introduction

As the 1960s came to a close, increasing pressure was brought to bear on broadcasters to augment women's participation on the air. The pressure came from the women's liberation movement and from changes in the law produced by the civil rights movement. Women's participation in broadcasting took several different forms. Three models emerged after 1964 to create access for women to the airwaves. The models met with varying degrees of success.

In the first model, women were hired to fill on-air positions traditionally held by men. Women simply stepped into the shoes of men. While the sex of the broadcaster was different, the gender content of the messages remained the same.

In the second model, women formed collectives and were granted small amounts of regularly-scheduled air time each week. During those slots, the stations broadcast programs created, produced, and often engineered by women. The women were usually volunteers, and their programs were broadcast on fringe, non-traditional radio stations that did not have high ratings. In this model, the gender content of a small part of the radio station programming was changed.

In the third model, the entire radio station programming was changed. The station was traditional in management structure, though economically marginal. In this third model, the complete gender content of the station programming was altered.

The first model has the longest history and has afforded women the greatest access to on air broadcasting. It is the only one which survives to any substantial extent. The second and third models, in which gender content was changed, are either completely gone or significantly diminished. The lesson to be learned is that female voices will be allowed on the air only if the message is gender neutral; messages that are women-gendered are either marginalized or silenced altogether.

Three Models of Access

The first model of access to the airwaves was the oldest, most traditional, and most widely accepted. In this model, women replaced men in already established broadcast positions. There was no alteration in the hierarchical organization of the workplace or the gender content of what was broadcast. The sex of the voice was changed, but the gender of the message was not. It was a mainstream model. The women broadcasters were often traditional liberal feminists.

The second access model was non-traditional in organization and radical in content. This form of women's access to airwaves has survived, but barely. In this model, alternative radio stations maintained their basic organization and format, but dedicated a small portion of their broadcast time to women who produced their own programs for, and about, women. These programs, produced using station equipment, but independent of direct station supervision of content, were then broadcast during regularly-allotted times. The women creating these programs typically organized into a collective and operated by consensus. Historically, the radio stations participating in this second access model were at the fringe of the broadcasting mainstream, either because they played non-traditional music or were publicly owned and operated. In the early 1970s they tended to be FM stations, because FM had a lower market saturation, smaller audiences, and generally programmed to the periphery.

In the third model of access, an entire radio station was dedicated to women's programming. It combined the traditional bureaucratic organization of a mainstream radio station with the more radical aspect of woman-centered programming. While the station's management, program, and sales structure was similar to the six thousand other traditional radio stations in the country, the content was markedly different. There were two examples of the second model of access to the airwaves. Neither one retained the woman-centered program content for more than a year-and-a-half.

First Model - Jobs

Within ten years after commercial radio began in the United States in 1920, women were given some voice, albeit limited, in broadcasting. They did not appear in great numbers, however; certainly nowhere in proportion to their majority status in the population. When women were heard on the radio in the 1930s, is was

as homemaker, advertiser, comedienne, women's editor, or occasionally newsmaker, as with Eleanor Roosevelt.[1]
It took much longer for women to be accepted as newscasters, first on radio and then on television, first locally and then nationally. With rare exceptions, women still were virtually locked out of broadcasting as the fifties drew to an end.

There were, though, those women who managed to distinguish themselves. For example, in Detroit, Fran Harris continued the radio and television career she began in 1931, principally as women's editor at WWJ-AM-FM-TV.[2] She had been allowed to broadcast the news on radio during World War II only after the male news anchors were drafted and no longer available for on-air duty.

As the 1960s progressed, women were less of an oddity in broadcasting. Buoyed in part by the same events that helped to create the women's liberation movement - a generally expanding economy, a postwar generation reaching employment age, more reliable birth control and fewer children, changes in homelife - more and more women entered the profession. The overall inclusion of women in the marketplace was paralleled by a steady growth in the number of women employed at local radio and television stations and the networks during the twenty years that followed the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 1979, women comprised 21.2% of the workforce in radio news. By 1984 that number had grown to 29.5% of the total radio newsroom staff. At the same time, the number of women radio news directors approached nearly 25%.[3]

Women looking for employment gains in broadcasting had further regulatory help. Several orders issued by the Federal Communications Commission, the administrative agency with broadcast industry oversight, greatly spurred the increase in the number of women employed in broadcasting. In 1968, the FCC proposed rules requiring broadcasters to establish and promote affirmative action programs for minority group members.[4] The rules were adopted in 1969. Two years later, the Commission proscribed sex discrimination.[5] In so doing, the FCC became the first administrative agency to adopt rules banning discrimination against women.

The adoption of employment rules addressing gender made it necessary for broadcasters to take positive steps to bring women into the profession in visible, audible ways. Some broadcast managers came willingly, while others needed the stimulus of potential sanctions to act. It took the threat of a license challenge for some local and network stations to increase the number of women hired to broadcast.

In an effort to get ABC to create greater employment opportunities for women, NOW pursued a license challenge against WABC-TV, charging that the station treated women employees unequally; that it failed to include women as a significant group in its ascertainment interviews with community leaders regarding programming needs, mandated by the FCC; and that it violated the Fairness Doctrine in its handling of the role of women in society. The network-owned television station responded by posting available jobs, hiring women in the sales department, holding consciousness-raising seminars for all employees, and requiring middle managers in all areas to both hire and promote more women.[6] In some measure as a response, between 1974 and 1982, female employment in radio and television broadcasting rose from roughly one-fifth of the total workforce to one-third.[7]

At the same time that broadcast stations were hiring women, the media was increasing its coverage of women and women's liberation movement. The notice was a mixed blessing as broadcaster reports regularly trivialized both women and feminism. Audiences heard and saw a skewed vision of what was happening within the movement, making it difficult for the public to make accurate judgments.[8] The coverage reflected an unflattering mainstream view of a liberal movement. Further, newly hired women reporters were sent to cover feature stories and traditional women's events. The hard news stories were generally reserved for men, as were the better work shifts; women often worked weekends.[9] In addition, female reporters were asked to join women's organizations so to be included in the group's mailing list and receive information about the group's activities.[10]

The topic of women in the media began to interest scholars in the early 1970s. Research on media portrayals of women and the impact on the audience appeared in academic communication journals with the research frequently guided by feminist theory. Scholars noticed the trivialization of women by the media and issued calls for change in the roles assigned to women.[11]

The increase in numbers of women employed did not, however, translate to meaningful positions of power within broadcast facilities. For example, the FCC, in a 1972 complaint regarding the employment practices of a Massachusetts television station applying for license renewal, found few women or minorities in the four upper job categories at the station identified as: officials and managers; professionals; technicians; and sales workers.[12] The experience at the television station was not uncommon in broadcasting; women were generally relegated to positions of lesser influence during the two decades after the passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964, even though both the number of women employed in broadcasting, and their percentage of the total workforce, were increasing. Without roles of influence, lacked the power to affect the content of what was broadcast in any real sense.

Second Model - Women's Radio Collectives

In addressing gender bias in broadcasting, feminists often made FM stations were their targets. The stations' hard rock, alternative, and heavy metal music tended to contain lyrics that were both sexist and anti-woman. Often, the FM stations had no women on their broadcast staffs. Beginning in the fall of 1969, there were confrontations between radical feminists and several FM stations across the country. Among the demands made by the women were increases in the numbers of female disc jockeys and more regularly-scheduled programming produced by members of the women's liberation movement.[13]

The publicly-owned Pacifica stations, including those in Los Angeles, Berkeley, Houston, and New York, were the first in the country to carry a feminist radio program in the country. Nanette Rainone, of WBAI-FM in New York, hosted "Womankind: Discussion and Commentary from the Feminist Community." It was a half-hour weekly program with news of the women's movement in 1969. The following year, in October, WBAI-FM added "Electra Rewired", a weekly talk show completely produced and broadcast by women.

Late in 1970, WBAI-FM offered yet a third program. This one was called "Consciousness Raising." It consisted of a 45 minute tape of a rap session, followed by 45 minutes of audience call-in.[14] In one particular "Consciousness Raising" show, the seven women who made up the weekly C-R group talked about men and violence. They shared feelings and experiences about their dislike of whistling and name-calling directed at them by men. They also expressed their rage at male sexual fantasies of women, and their fears of battering and rape at the hands of men. The episode was one of twenty produced for WBAI-FM. The C-R group met at least once a week to work on topics for the broadcast. Every Sunday they gathered in the WBAI-FM studios to produce the show. Other topics covered in "Consciousness Raising" included adolescent puberty rituals ("How I First Learned About Menstruation"), housework, masturbation, and monogamy.[15]

In the spring of 1970 a coalition of feminist groups disrupted a staff meeting at KSAN-FM, an anti-establishment rock station in San Francisco. They demanded air time and access to production facilities to create and broadcast their own program. The station management concurred and agreed to train the women. The groups received time for three half-hour programs weekly.[16] Concurrently, a Boston politico group, Bread and Roses, picketed Boston hard-rock station WBCN-AM, protesting the anti-woman content of music lyrics broadcast by the station. Several months later, WBCN-AM aired a half-hour program produced by members of the group that addressed the issue of sexism in rock 'n' roll. The station went further, and was one of the first to hire women as disc jockeys.[17]

While their programs were neither slick nor well-produced, and the stations on which they aired were not highly rated by Arbitron, the industry audience survey, women's programming gained a foothold. The vehicle for access was often a women's collective, a model for program production and broadcast begun in 1969. The names of the collectives often reflected themes of the women's liberation movement. One list, developed by the Detroit Women's Radio

Workshop, included 17 women's radio collectives in the United States and Canada The cohort included: the Kansas City Women's Liberation Union Radio Collective; Radio Free Women in Toronto; Sisters of Sappho at SUNY in Buffalo; Radio Free Feminists in Atlanta; the Lesbian Feminist Radio Collective; and the Durham Women's Radio Collective.[18] There were others: the Mother Jones Collective, Unlearning Not to Speak; WOMEN NOW; the Feminist Radio Serial Project; WOMANSOUND; Being ourselves; The Sistersharing Collective; and Women Hold Up 1/2 the Sky.[19] In Evanston, Illinois, Radio Free Chicago broadcast a program from midnight to 5:00 A.M. called "Suzie Creamcheese Collective." The shows, which began in July of 1970, contained mostly music, with some discussion of feminist issues.[20]

A substantial network of women's radio collectives developed in the early seventies. As with the feminist newspapers, presses and journals seven and eight years earlier, the radio collectives communicated frequently with one another usually by newsletter. The Feminist Radio Network, which initially went under the name of Radio Free Women, began in 1972. It was based in Washington, and served as a clearinghouse for feminist audio tapes produced throughout the country. The FRN published a catalogue for Fall, 1974 offering 54 different programs with topics ranging from women and health, and women's studies, to women making movies.[21] There was a New Women's Survival Catalogue which contained information about women's radio collectives around the country, and the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press published a documentary sourcebook titled Women in Media.[22]

The Detroit Women's Radio Workshop was formed in 1971, and went on the air with its first program on October 4, 1971. The broadcast featured the Livonia Women's Center, and the politics of housework. The show bore the name "All Together Now", drawn from the title of a song by the Beatles.

The Detroit Women's Radio Workshop began with five women as members, including writer and poet Marge Piercy. Like collectives in other cities, the women developed, assembled, engineered and broadcast their own show. "All Together Now" aired on WDET-FM, a public station owned and operated by Wayne State University. The members of the Detroit Women's Radio Workshop were dedicated to broadening the scope of feminism, and spelled out the goals in their mission statement: "The purpose of the show is to inform, educate and entertain Detroit area women and other feminists. It addresses events, ideas, music and the arts from a feminist perspective."[23] The workshop's philosophy appeared in a separate section of the same document, written in 1979. "Membership in the collective has changed and grown since the beginning (...) but the emphasis is still the same: women working together to bring light to their position in society; digging deep for alternatives to unfulfilling, unsatisfying or oppressive situations." [24] [Emphasis in original.] The philosophy concluded by stating that the variety of topics covered were all "treated from the perspective of women's political struggle."[25]

Anne Weitzel joined the Detroit Women's Radio Workshop shortly after it formed. Her experience with the collective was not atypical. "I had heard one of their programs appealing for volunteers. I had read a lot of feminist literature so even though I had no previous broadcasting experience, I wanted to put my money where my mouth was,"[26] Weitzel explained that the workshop hoped to serve the women's community. "We taped women's lecturers and conferences," she said. "We did interviews of particular interest to feminists," covering such topics "as rape, abortion, alcoholism, child care, witchcraft, legislation and religion."[27]

Program topics broadcast during the fall of 1971, the first three months "All Together Now" was on the air, resembled those discussed on the air by other women's radio collectives. They included divorce, socialization of little girls, rape, women as sex objects, natural childbirth, the Daughters of Bilitis, and childcare.[28]

The broadcasts in following years remained focused on events, ideas, music and the arts as viewed from a feminist perspective. Topics aired in 1979 included woman goddess, female genital mutilation, women in the martial arts, nuclear power and Karen Silkwood, local feminist writers, women and science fiction, Anais

Nin, black women in the arts, and death and dying.

Detroit Women's Radio Workshop member Toni Swanger joined the workshop in 1973, her interest sparked by a women's studies class.[29] On January 8, 1980, Swanger hosted a program of highlights from "All Together Now" broadcasts of 1979. The first segment on the program was titled "When God Was a Woman", inspired by Merlin Stone's book of the same name. "When God Was a Woman" initially aired on WDET-FM on May 22, 1979 and, according to Swanger, the show "generated, believe it or not, our first bomb threat."[30]. The program contained readings from When God Was a Woman, which explored the strength, competence, sexuality and vitality of women during a period the author claimed ended more than six thousand years ago.

The same "All Together Now" broadcast included excerpts of a speech given by theologian and feminist Mary Daly, author of Beyond God the Father, on female genital mutilation and the rise of gynecology as part of American medical practice. The program contained clear, graphic descriptions by Daly of the three principal forms of clitoral circumcision performed throughout Africa and the Arab world.[31]

"All Together Now" also featured "Women in the Martial Arts" in a program broadcast in 1979, on October 9. It profiled Jay Spiro, owner of a local karate school. Spiro had been interviewed by Anna of "Gaily Speaking", a program for the lesbian and gay community in

Detroit, also broadcast on WDET-FM. "All Together Now" re-broadcast the Spiro interview, first in October, then in January, 1980. The "All Together Now Highlights" broadcast of this interview opened with a song advocating that women "fight back to make a safe home."[32]2 Spiro, holder of a Third Degree Black Belt in karate, explained women's interest in the area. "As women realize that we are oppressed and that we want to be more powerful, people turn to the martial arts as a way of developing confidence and power in themselves."[33]

Membership in the Detroit Women's Radio Workshop totaled five in 1971, and never exceeded 20. The women in the workshop met monthly through the better part of the seventies, usually on the first Sunday, for a potluck brunch at the home of one of the members. The meetings centered on the planning of future programs, a critique of shows already broadcast and the general business, including financial, of the collective. Leadership roles rotated.[34]

Despite the staunchly feminist, often controversial material presented by the Detroit Women's Radio Workshop, "All Together Now" continued on the air at WDET-FM into 1980, though the program had been reduced in air time and moved to different time slots several times. By 1981 "All Together Now" and other community-based programs were almost completely eliminated from WDET's broadcast schedule.[35]

Feminist programs, produced by local women's collectives, managed to maintain a foothold on the air through most of the 1970s. Their numbers dwindled toward the end of the decade for several reasons. First, as FM stations gained strength in the marketplace so that they were no longer fringe, the station management could not economically justify turning air time over to alternative programs. Such programs broke the program flow of the station, and did not generate any revenue. Second, in line with the philosophy of the Reagan Administration, the Federal Communications Commission, chaired by Mark Fowler, entered into a substantial campaign to de-regulate broadcasting in the early 1980s. As a result, there was less pressure on broadcasters to air news and public affairs programs such as those produced by women's radio collectives. Third, the decline in collective-produced shows paralleled the backlash to the women's liberation movement. As interest in the movement, and attention to the movement's core issues fell off, so, too, did women's radio collectives and the programs they produced. Adverse reaction to the content of the programs led to marginalization and elimination of the collectives.

Third Model - A Station Just for Women

The first radio station to identify itself as a woman's station was WOMN-AM in New Haven, Connecticut. The station was licensed by the FCC as an AM daytime facility, broadcasting at 1220 kilohertz at 1000 watts, and required to sign-off at sundown. It was a technically weak broadcast facility.

In 1977, Robert Herpe, the owner of WPLR-FM in New Haven, sought to increase his broadcast holdings by purchasing WCDQ-AM, as the station was then called. The WCDQ-AM station broadcast a Top 40 music format, performed poorly in the face of competition from FM rock stations, and was for sale. Herpe, WPLR vice president Richard Kalt, and WPLR news director Terry Branham discussed potential formats for the AM station and agreed there was a market for a women's format. "We batted around ideas," said Kalt, "and Herpe asked,'What about a women's format?' I said it could be viable if properly positioned, and would depend on how it was programmed." Kalt believed that there was room for the format, and "if it failed," he assured Herpe, "it would not be for lack of effort."[36]

Branham was also enthusiastic about a format for women. "I said 'yes', all the while wondering how it would happen. There was the thought of making it a station for women without a thought as to what that meant. 'Women' made up a diverse community in New Haven."[37]

Herpe acquired WCDQ-AM and applied for a change of call letters on June 30, 1978. The new call letters were WOMN-AM, and the station was identified by the broadcasters, on the air, as WOMAN radio. WOMN-AM began broadcasting with the new woman-centered format August, 28, 1978, a day picked to coincide with Women's

Equality Day, according to Les Thimmig, the director of women's programming at WOMN-AM.[38]. The station, as Herpe envisioned it, would provide in-depth coverage of events from a woman's point of view, and would work to improve communication between women and men. Herpe also wanted to "give a chance to that other 50 percent of the world to give input to the media."[39] Kalt was very cautious, however, to avoid putting the label "feminist" on the new format. In an interview with a reporter he said, "Studies show about 50 percent of people are turned off by overtly feminist things, while the rest like it. So why lose half your audience before you even get going?"[40]

The initial response by New Haven advertisers to the new radio station format was good. Kalt and his sales staff presented WOMN-AM to advertisers as "the only station programmed totally to the needs of today's woman. When you use WOMAN to reach New Haven Women your message is delivered to decision makers, heads of households, and spenders of discretionary income."[41] The station was commercially sold out the first three weeks it was on the air. Its advertisers included local supermarket chains, record stores, auto dealers, the New Haven Nighthawks minor hockey club and a new racquetball club which featured a daycare facility for new members.[42]

The media response to the station was significant. There were articles in Business Week, Ms., Vogue, in addition to The New York Times, area newspapers and industry publications. Newsweek magazine's cable program "Newsweek Woman" taped a feature on the station; Swedish national television sent a crew and a correspondent for a story. The New Haven station with its novel format generated a stir.

A feature article on WOMN-AM appeared in Ms. in March, 1979. Headlined "Tuning in on the Voice of WOMN-AM", the story described the new station, its innovative programming and the people who had put the station on the air, and those who were operating it. In the article, reporter Fran Hawthorne captured the essence, of the radio station when she wrote, "The station began broadcasting last August to speak to and about women; it tries to play music that women like, highlight issues of importance to women and bring attention to female artists."[43]

The public affairs programming spoke decidedly to women from a cultural feminist perspective. Among the features aired during WOMN-AM's first several months of operation were programs on parents' role reversal, the women's movement, nurse-midwives, birth control, battered women, women's music, Susan B. Anthony, and sexist language.[44]

The Mother Goddess was the subject of a WOMAN Feature broadcast November 14 and repeated November 18, 1978. In an interview with Elizabeth Maffeo, an astrologer, teacher, and herbalogist, WOMN-AM director of women's programming Les Thimmig and Maffeo discussed Merlin Stone's book When God Was a Woman. In her introduction, Thimmig said, "when the shift in religious focus took place from the mother to the father principle, there was a great deal of violence." She continued, "The people firmly believed in their goddess structure, and they intended to keep it, but the fist of the very strict father principle took over."[45]

Another feature program on WOMN addressed the issue of sexual harassment in an interview with feminist legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon, then a New Haven attorney. MacKinnon offered examples of sexual harassment, including that of the male professor awarding a female student an 'A' only if she had sexual relations with him. "In my opinion," said MacKinnon, "you have been sexually harassed because he has announced a sexually discriminatory standard for evaluating your work - namely whether you're going to sleep with him."[46]

The station also examined abortion in a two-part series which presented both sides of the issue. In a feature aired on January 22, 1979, Nancy Wickett, a board member of the Connecticut National Abortion Rights Action League, raised concern about the chipping away of rights, six years after the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade. Wickett defended her group's position relative to those opposed to it. She vigorously attacked those who sought restrictions on women's access to abortion. "I really resent the term pro-life because it implies that anyone who does not go along with their thinking is anti-life. We believe very strongly in the quality of life and in the right of the woman to choose."[47] In the broadcast, Thimmig described the issue as "a red-hot one, sparking passion and anger on both sides."[48]

On the following day, the station explored the other side of the abortion debate was. Carol Murphy, president of the Pro-Life Council of Connecticut, said that women do have choice in the matter of reproduction. But Murphy drew the line in a place different from Wickett had the previous day when she said, "That right ends when a new life has begun. That new life has rights also."[49] Murphy added that she would not judge a woman who had an abortion as she "could be misguided by her parents or peers."[50] Thimmig took care to point out that WOMN had aired both sides of the abortion debate, using language that was drawn from the FCC's Fairness Doctrine, which required broadcasting of opposing viewpoints on controversial issues.

Women's program director Thimmig also explored alternate forms of sexual expression in a five-part series on gay lifestyles which was broadcast on WOMN-AM. In the first installment, Thimmig interviewed two lesbians who had come out of the closet. The first woman, a 21-year old who had been out for three years, dismissed her mother's reaction to her being a lesbian by insisting she was only going through a phase. "Well," the daughter explained, "I've been going through this 'phase' since I was 15 when I realized that I did tend more toward women."[51] The second woman interviewed was a 29-year old lesbian mother who had been out for three years. She explained how the experience had liberated her. "There was an intensely euphoric feeling which I have never experienced before or since. And I knew that all of those years of pretending, to aim for 'Harriet Housewife', and reading Playgirl and all of that - to hide my homosexuality -was just that. It was hiding, it was playing at being instead of actually being who I was."[52]

The station's program mainstay was music, and the music format was Album Oriented Rock (AOR). Cindy Bailen, the station's music director, mixed both male and female artists, but broke the traditional AOR mode by requiring a minimum of one female artist to every two male artists played. [53] The female disc jockeys also played feminist music by artists like Holly Near and Chris Williamson tucked in between traditional and better known artists like Fleetwood Mac, Linda Rondstadt, Bonnie Raitt and Laura Nyro.

Bailen paid close attention to the lyrics of the songs broadcast on WOMN-AM. Music lyrics considered sexist or demeaning were not played.[54] The issue of rock lyrics was an important one to the programmers at WOMN-AM, and to the women's liberation movement generally. In 1970, Marion Meade had written about the degrading image of women portrayed in the lyrics of rock music. Meade pointed out that "since rock is written almost entirely by men, it's hardly surprising to find it riddled with notions of male superiority. And, for that matter, the entire rock 'culture' screams of sexism."[55]

Programmers at WOMN-AM also gave thought to the commercials aired by the station. Commercials that promoted stereotypes of women as helpless or flighty were sent back for re-writing. Thimmig told Ms., "I don't think we'd be big on advertising a Clint Eastwood movie."[56] Station president Herpe articulated a clear policy when he stated "We have strict acceptance standards. The copy should not put down women in any way."[57]

Within a year, serious problems that threatened its future developed at WOMN-AM. The station failed to distinguish itself in the Arbitron ratings and advertising revenues fell off. Some of the station staff attributed the difficulties to the music selection played. Kalt believed the format became too feminist. "All we wound up playing," he said, "was message music, followed by a p.s.a. (public service announcement) for a rape crisis center and later in the hour a segment on Planned Parenthood." The narrow focus was detrimental to the station's success. "We lost sight of the general women's community."[58] Added to that liability was the fact that the station remained a low-power AM daytime facility.

At least one disc jockey at WOMN-AM believed that there was a homophobic reaction to the radio station in the New Haven community. Sam Tilery, who began at WOMN-AM in 1980 as the station was moving away from a woman-centered format, saw evidence of such fears. Tilery said, "When it first went on the air, women and gay activists jumped on it. They were excited, and they weren't prepared for what followed." In Tilery's view,"They lost men who wouldn't listen, or who wouldn't admit to listening." Beyond that, there was a split between lesbian and heterosexual women, according to Tilery. He remained a supporter of the woman-centered program concept but admitted, "It was too good to be true."[59]

WOMN-AM ceased to operate as a radio station programmed specifically for women in September of 1979. Five months later, the on-air staff was instructed to stop calling the station WOMAN radio on the air, and exclusively identify it as W-O-M-N. The programming reverted to Top 40, and feminist programming all but disappeared.[60] Later in 1980, the station unofficially renamed itself PLR2 in an effort to capitalize on the success of its powerful FM counterpart. By then, almost all of the on-air staff from WOMN-AM had left the station.[61]

WOMN-AM was not the only radio station to change its format to woman-centered programming. On January 1, 1982, WWMN-AM, licensed to Flint, Michigan began broadcasting a woman-centered format using new call letters, and promoting itself as "Flint's New Woman". There were similarities between WWMN-AM in Flint and WOMN-AM in New Haven. In Flint, as in New Haven, the radio station had been failing financially in the market. Both stations were, and remain, AM stations. Both were licensed by the FCC to operate only during daytime hours. In Flint, as in New Haven, there were high hopes for success, backed by a strong, initial promotional campaign. Peter Cavanaugh, station manager of WWCK-FM, the companion to WWMN-AM, said that before the station became "Flint's New Woman", it broadcast under the call letters of WLQB-AM and presented religious programs. Gencom, the owner of the two stations, was not satisfied with revenues from the AM station. Company president Frazier Reams and Cavanaugh decided to explore new programming concepts in 1981. "We looked at various ideas," said Cavanaugh, "and one or the other of us came up with the idea of an all-women's station. At that time, we weren't aware that it had been tried elsewhere." Cavanaugh agreed to get the station set in a new format and then turn it over to a female staff member to manage. "It needed to be run by women."[62]

With promotion that included birth announcements declaring "It's a girl!", baby blue and pink billboards, and 10 second television commercials, the station began broadcasting its new format New Year's Day, 1982. WWMN-AM built its programming around women. It also featured women air personalities, including Jacque, a Detroit-based psychic. A daily afternoon call-in show was hosted by a Flint woman psychologist. The music mix was woman-oriented, but care was taken to keep the playlist from being too narrow. Nancy Dymond, a former sales executive at WWMN-AM, described the playlist as soft rock. "We played Barry Manilow, but not all the time."[63]

As in the case of WOMN-AM, there was national publicity that included articles in Billboard, Advertising Age and local newspapers. A segment about WWMN-AM appeared on "Newsweek Woman", the same cable program that earlier had done a feature on WOMN-AM. The five-minute "Newsweek Woman" program presented interviews with Cavanaugh, and with Linda Lanci, the music and program director. The program also featured interviews with three men and one woman randomly stopped on the street in Flint. The host opened the show segment by asking what one might do with a "station floundering in a city with one of the highest unemployment rates in the country?" She then answered her own question, "You have nothing to lose, so why not start all over again with a brand new approach?"[64] That new approach when "there is nothing left to lose" was a station for women.

Cavanaugh explained that station management decided to take a narrow programming approach. He said, "We started looking at the possibility of appealing to females. There was, as far as we could perceive, a vacuum for that sort of thing [radio programming for women] in Flint."[65] He erroneously added, "We were astounded to find out as we went along that we were the first in the country to try such a thing."[66]

Lanci said that she had received calls from men who did not like the woman-centered programming being broadcast on the station. "Automatically, they think this is a 'feminist' station."[67] She believed that if the station "can work in Flint, it can work just about anywhere."

The men interviewed on the street expressed cautious acceptance of WWMN-AM. One man said the station would be all right "if they play a little country" while another man, dressed in a coat and tie, said the bottom line is profit, and "if they can make a profit with men or women, it's all right."[68] The only woman shown said she liked to listen to the station because, "I like the music and I like not having any commercials."[69] It was precisely the lack of commercials and advertising support that made the station not economically viable and prompted a format change.

The Flint experiment was even shorter-lived than its counter-part in New Haven. The station went on the air backed by a $50,000 advertising budget, but barely registered in the Spring, 1982, Arbitron ratings book.[70] WWMN-AM was a full-blown women's station for only seven months. Cavanaugh attributed defeat to the 1982 recession. "It was an incredible, wonderful mix. If it had been full-time and FM," said Cavanaugh, "it would have been a home run."

Conclusion

Differences in the three models of access to the radio airwaves used by women encourage further speculation about why only the first model, jobs, continues to enjoy any measure of success. The first model pre-dated the women's liberation movement. Beginning in 1971, it operated under a government mandate. Its content was gender neutral, and it proposed assimilation of women into the mainstream culture. The first model is liberal feminist in that it stresses the sameness of women and men. Women make gains through application of equal rights under the law.

Women have been most successful gaining entrance to American institutions, in general, by being unobtrusive.[71] They have been allowed to join the social services, higher education, foundations, the professions, armed forces, and churches, as well as the media, on the condition that they are generally obedient and their behavior conforms to rules established by men.[72]

Women's failure to advance in radio jobs in proportion to their numbers rests in part with the lackluster enforcement of Federal Communications Commission rules in the eighties. As part of a general plan of broadcast deregulation, the FCC put substantially less pressure on stations to increase the numbers of women and minorities in broadcasting. Still, jobs were, and are, available to women. More female voices are heard on the radio today than were heard a quarter of a century ago. The condition appears to be that while the voice can be female, the message cannot be gendered feminist.

The second model of access, women's radio collectives, survived much longer than the third, a station just for women, in large part, because it has not been in the limelight. The second model was originally the creation of radical feminists. As radical feminism was replaced by cultural feminism, the second model, too, became cultural feminist. While the content of the women's radio collective programming was at least as radical as that aired on stations just for women, the collectives were tolerated because they were on the periphery of the broadcast structure. Not only were the stations that aired their programming non-traditional in ownership and operating at the fringe, barely registering in the ratings, women's radio collectives were generally broadcast only one or two hours out of 168 a week on these marginal stations. When the collectives were allowed more time, it was usually after midnight. Thus, the gendered messages of the women's radio collectives, while threatening to the male establishment, were tolerated because few people other than those purposely seeking them out heard them.

The women's radio collectives have diminished in number, and the air time allotted to them has decreased, for several reasons. First, they reflect the ebb and flow of the women's liberation movement generally. In the 1990s, there is less activity on the feminist political scene, including the media. Second, as the fringe FM stations gained market share in the late seventies, space for alternative programming decreased. Feminist programming brought in no advertising revenues. Third, as part of the general deregulation of broadcasting in the eighties, the FCC eliminated many news and public affairs program requirements. Women's radio collectives were no longer needed to satisfy the FCC.

The third model of access to the airwaves, a station just for women, was highly traditional in management structure and gendered feminist in program content. It was also a substantial failure, for several reasons. First, it was established, in both New Haven and Flint, on the AM band, at a low wattage, daytime station when FM radio stations were beginning to dominate the market. AM daytime station broadcast operations were marginal, no matter what the format. Second, woman-centered programming was put in place at the end of the major wave of the modern women's liberation movement. The Equal Rights Amendment was foundering. Membership in the National Organization for Women had peaked and, in 1978, a backlash against the women's movement was gaining energy. The management at both stations had missed the crest of interest in things woman and were being pulled out by the undertow. Their notion of what was trendy was already outdated.

Most important in the demise of these two stations was the fact that while the station structure was mainstream, the programming was gendered feminist. Even though the stations technical facilities were weak, feminist messages were being communicated via a mainstream medium, not a fringe, non-traditional station. The publicity both stations received at their inception also hurt them by drawing attention to the fact that the programming was for women and, by implication, not for men. That women were on the air, talking to one another, about issues of concern to women, was a threat to men in the community. The messages broadcast by the women-centered stations ultimately, and rather quickly, scared advertisers who did not want their products to be associated with the cause of women's liberation. Both Herpe and Kalt at WOMN-AM in New Haven, and Cavanaugh at WWMN-AM in Flint, understood this, and tried unsuccessfully to avoid being viewed as feminist.

The lesson of the three models of access available to women during the two decades following passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a time when women were searching for ways to have their voices heard, is a sober one - keep the content gender neutral and women can speak. Messages that are gendered feminist are either marginalized or silenced altogether.

1. Fran Harris, early radio and television broadcaster, interview by author, 20 September 1989, Westland, Michigan.

2. Who's Who of American Women: 14th edition 1885-1986 (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1984), 337.

3. Vernon A. Stone, "Trends in the Status of Minorities and Women in Broadcast News," Journalism Quarterly 18 (Spring, 1988): 291.

4. Memorandum Opinion and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Requiring Broadcasters to Show Nondiscrimination in Their Employment Practices, 13 F.C.C.2d (1968).

5. F.C.C. Report and Order Docket #19269, Dec. 28, 1971, effective Feb. 4, 1972, and Docket #18244; F.C.C. Rules and Regulations, Section 73.125 (a) and Section 73.125 (b).

6. Marlene Sanders, "The long-term solution: Time," The Quill, February 1990, 23.

7. 1974 figure drawn from a study of U.S.-Canadian women in journalism by Gertrude Joch Robinson, "Women, Media Access and Social Control," Women and the News, Laurily Kerr Epstein, ed., (New York: Hastings House, 1978), 88. The 1982 figure was compiled by the F.C.C. and reported in "Women on the Job: Careers in the Electronic Media," Nancy McCormick-Pickett, ed., (American Women in Radio and Television, Inc. and the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, 1984), 1.

8. Winifred D. Wandersee, On the Move: American Women in the 1970s (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988), 155.

9. Sanders, "The long-term solution: Time," 23.

10. As a reporter at WVIC-AM-FM in East Lansing, the author was told in 1974 by the assignment editor, Paul Weisenfeld, to join the Lansing chapter of the National Organization for Women because, according to Weisenfeld, "We need to know what they're doing."

11. Lana F. Rakow, "Rethinking Gender Research in Communication," Journal of Communication, 34 (Autumn 1986), 18.

12. Epstein, Women and the News, 76.

13. Judith Hole and Ellen Levine, The Rebirth of Feminism, (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1971), 275.

14. Ibid., 275.

15. Anne Koedt, Ellen Levine and *anita Rapone, ed., Radical Feminism, (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1973), 63.

16. Ibid., 276.

17. Ibid.

18. "Listing of Feminists in Radio," photocopy, from the personal collection of Toni Swanger, a member of the Detroit Women's Radio Workshop, Detroit, Michigan.

19. Correspondence, photocopy, personal collection of Toni Swanger, Detroit.

20. Hole and Levine, Rebirth of Feminism, 275.

21. "Feminist Radio Network: Fall 1974 Catalogue," papers of the Detroit Women's Radio Workshop, photocopy, personal collection of Toni Swanger, Detroit, Michigan.

22. Papers of the Detroit Women's Radio Workshop, photocopy, personal collection of Toni Swanger, Detroit, Michigan.

23. "All Together Now," papers of the Detroit Women's Radio Workshop, photocopy, private collection of Toni Swanger, Detroit, Michigan.

24. Ibid., 2.

25. Ibid., 2.

26. Alice Hagerty, "Broadcasting for Women," The Detroit News.

27. Ibid.

28. "Tape Inventory," photocopy, papers of the Detroit Women's Radio Workshop, personal collection of Toni Swanger, Detroit.

29. Toni Swanger, interview by author, 27 March 1991, Detroit, Michigan.

30. "All Together Now Highlights," "All Together Now," 8 January 1980.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. "Minutes of ATN Meeting," photocopy, papers of the Detroit Women's Radio Workshop, personal collection of Toni Swanger, Detroit.

52. Ibid.

53. "WOMN on the Rise," Radio & Records, 22 December 1978.

54. Hawthorne, "Tuning in on the Voice of WOMN-AM," 17.

55. Marion Meade, "Women and Rock: Sexism Set to Music," Women: A Journal of Liberation 2 (Fall 1970): 25.

56. Hawthorne, "Tuning in on the Voice of WOMN-AM," 17.

57. "A Radio Station with a Feminist Air," Business Week, 2 October 1978, 32.

58. Kalt.

59. Sam Tilery, interview by author, telephone, 11 March 1991, New Haven, Connecticut.

60. Tilery.

61. The station went "dark" (stopped broadcasting) for four months in 1981. It returned to the air under the call letters WCSR-AM with a Country format. Subsequent formats have included Solid Gold as WNNR-AM, and all-business using the call letters WXCT-AM.

62. Peter Cavanaugh, interview by author, 1 April 1991, WIOT-FM offices, Toledo, Ohio.

63. Nancy Dymond, interview by author, 1 April 1991, WIOT offices, Toledo, Ohio.

64. "A Women's Station," "Newsweek Woman," August, 1980.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. Cavanaugh.

71. Mary Fainson Katzenstein, "Feminism within American Institutions," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 16 (Autumn 1990): 27.

72. Ibid., 37.

35. Series of memos between John Buckstaff, WDET-FM station manager and Community Producers in September and October, 1979, photocopy, papers of Detroit Women's Radio Workshop, personal collection of Toni Swanger, Detroit.

36. Richard Kalt, interview by author, telephone, 14 March 1991, New Haven, Connecticut.

37. Terry Branham, interview by author, telephone, 12 March, 1991, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

38. Les Thimmig, interview by author, telephone, 25 March 1991, New Haven, Connecticut.

39. Melinda Robbins, "Radio Station, Women on the Same Wave Length," New Haven (Connecticut) Journal Courier, 4 September 1978.

40. The New York Times, 21 December 1978.

41. WOMN-AM advertising brochure "WOMAN is ..." July, 1978, photocopy, original in personal collection of Les Thimmig, New Haven, Connecticut.

42. "A Station with a Feminist Air," Business Week, 2 October 1978, 32.

43. Fran Hawthorne, "Tuning in the Voice of WOMN-AM," Ms., March 1979, 17.

44. WOMAN (sic) Features Log, 2 September 1978 to 12 May 1979, photocopy, personal collection of Les Thimmig, New Haven, Connecticut.

45. "The Mother Goddess - II" WOMAN Feature 14, 18 November 1979, audio tape, private collection of Les Thimmig, New Haven, Connecticut.

46. Catharine MacKinnon, interview on WOMN-AM, audio tape, private collection of Les Thimmig, New Haven, Connecticut.

47.47. "Pro-Choice", WOMAN Feature, 22 January 1979, audio tape, private collection of Les Thimmig, New Haven, Connecticut.

48. Ibid.

49. "Anti-Abortion," WOMAN Feature, 23 January 1979, audio tape, private collection of Les Thimmig, New Haven, Connecticut.

50. Ibid.

51. "Gay Lifestyles - I," WOMAN Feature, audio tape, private collection of Les Thimmig, New Haven, Connecticut.

THE NEWS BOX:

RE-EVALUATING RADIO NEWS IN THE 1920s

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to is to re-evaluate radio news in the emerging youthful period of the 1920s; this will be done by forming a synthesis and composite from previous references about radio news. In particular, it will seek to show that radio could be seen as a "news box" as well as a "music box" during its first decade of development. As such, it opened a new informational avenue that allowed for greater "knowledge" on the part of its listeners.

THE NEWS BOX:
RE-EVALUATING RADIO NEWS IN THE 1920s

MICHAEL ANTECOL

> I have in mind a plan of development which would make radio a "household utility" ... The idea is to bring music into the homes by wireless ... The "Radio Music Box" ... can be placed on a table ... the switch set accordingly and the music received ... The same principle can be extended to numerous other fields as, for example, receiving lectures at home which can be made perfectly audible; **also, events of national importance can be simultaneously announced and received**. [emphasis added]
>
> David Sarnoff, RCA memorandum, 1916[1]

A "radio music box" could, thus, also be a "radio news box." What Sarnoff, the young visionary, envisioned was two-fold: the broadcast of entertainment and of news. Generally, however, most scholars, as set out below, begin serious consideration of radio news at the so-called press-radio war of the early 1930s. As a result, scholars have generally bypassed the youth of radio news in the 1920s, or have taken a dismissive attitude, and have moved directly on to its adolescence. Consequently, the purpose of this paper is to re-evaluate news in the emerging youthful period of the 1920s; this will be done by forming a synthesis and composite from previous references about radio news. In particular this paper will seek to answer the following two questions:

1. Based on the available sources, is it possible to consider radio in the 1920s as a "news box"?
2. If yes, could radio be seen as a new informational avenue that allowed for greater "knowledge" on the part of its listeners?

Obviously, it would be much stronger to rely on primary sources for answers to the above questions. However, such sources are not available; for example, wire and tape recording capabilities were not present during the 1920s and transcriptions were rarely made so the record of news broadcasts is almost non-existent.[2] Consequently, this paper relies upon extensive secondary sources to form its composite view of radio news in the 1920s.

Those sources, mostly scholarly, fall into one of three fairly distinct categories: first, general overviews such as textbooks[3], broadcasting histories[4] and programming histories[5]; second, histories of print and broadcast news[6]; and finally, journal-bound question-specific materials. This last group can be subcategorized as follows: presidential elections during the 1920s[7], the development of news commentary[8] and the so-called press-radio war.[9] The categorizations themselves indicate the materials' limitations. The general overviews provide only the briefest of accounts of any one particular period as the need to cover huge blocks of time without writing an encyclopedic-length book predominated. These histories rely almost exclusively on major developments without necessarily looking beyond the location in which those developments took place; namely, the city. One gets the distinct impression that radio existed only in Pittsburgh, New Jersey and New York City. Similarly, the utility of those sources with item or question-specific information is limited to their focus. None of the sources dealt with radio news in the 1920s in anything but a cursory way, providing sketch outlines of a decade's worth of events. It is perhaps a result of the cursory nature of these inquiries that has lead to the almost complete acceptance of the dismissive attitude toward radio news in the 1920s.

The standard view of radio in the 1920s generally centers on its rapid growth into a mass medium capable of being a "radio music box." Indeed, this growth was remarkable. Less than two years after KDKA (Pittsburgh), the country's first commercial broadcaster, began broadcasting on November 2, 1920[10], there were already 600 stations in the United Stated.[11] Similarly, between 1922 and 1925 the percentage of American households with radios grew from 0.2 to 10.1[12]; by 1930 that percentage reached 46.[13] By 1929 there were 9 million homes with radio sets and an audience of at least 40 million listeners.[14]

Broadcasters experimented with many styles and formats during the initial years of consumer radio broadcasting. Although it was an era of progression and an era of "firsts"[15] in all aspects of the industry, including news, concentration in the literature has been placed on the growth of various forms of entertainment. For that reason there has been a great deal of discussion concerning the general interest programs which began to emerge by the middle of the decade[16] as well as the still dominant live music programming.[17] Generally, these programs included classical and light music, recitations, talks for children, dramas, religious services and ballroom dances, and public service announcements.[18]

The subsequent concern of academics was the development and growth of "quality" entertainment programming. Although quality increased as one-time shows were gradually being replaced by weekly programs that led to increased and loyal audiences[19], many scholars contend that quality did not improve dramatically until the introduction of networks.[20] Consequently, a great of emphasis has been placed on the birth of NBC in 1926, the first company formed exclusively for the purposes of networking[21], and the more modest CBS which premiered in 1927.[22] Program quality and quantity on the networks increased exponentially during the remaining years of the decade[23], although programming on CBS grew at a much slower pace than it did at NBC.[24]

Despite the clear opportunity for local stations to have much of their programming time filled, the number of affiliated stations remained remarkably small during the last 4 years of the decade. By 1927, of the 733 licensed stations[25] only 71 stations were affiliated with networks.[26] Thus, local stations remained dominant. These stations were either run independently or they joined with others in quasi-network arrangements with program sharing and advertising quotations based on pooled audiences.[27] Perhaps because of the continuing dominance of local stations, many scholars have remarked that the overall quality during the decade was anything but outstanding, although this is by no means clear. The following comment is typical: "All across the country radio proved irresistibly attractive to a variety of raffish, offbeat individuals who exploited [radio] as a personal mouthpiece."[28] However, by simply looking back retrospectively at the content of radio when it was in its nascent decade and declaring it to be mediocre, scholars have conveniently sidestepped the need for investigating local stations and their programming, including news, in anything but a cursory fashion. They have generally been content to conclude that by the middle of the decade, radio was developing the types of entertainment programs and the personalities that would flourish for the next three decades.[29]

By contrast, average listeners could not have been solely concerned with quality. Whether good or bad, radio, initially at least, created a new world for average listeners, a heretofore never-imagined world. For the first time in history, they could be miraculously,

> ... transported to Carnegie Hall, to distant football fields, to nightclubs and ballrooms where the new dance music was being played, and eventually to anywhere a microphone and a remote transmitter could be placed, **which meant they were vicarious witnesses of news events.**[30] [emphasis added]

For average listeners, the local station became their library, theater, club and newspaper. Through radio, listeners were able to meet many famous and interesting people, including the president.[31] It seems logical, therefore, to assume that being privy to those events and locales must have been equally important for average listeners. Radio became a new source of information; listeners who already read a newspaper were now be able to triangulate, those that didn't were now be able to receive information that otherwise would have by-passed them, especially farmers who were still a large isolated percentage of the population at this time. As Eunice Barnard stated rather bluntly in 1924: "... radio went further than the newspaper by reaching the lazy, the illiterate, and the prejudiced, the mentally as well as the physically remote."[32] These stations, thereby, became not only the listeners' entertainment factory but also their "radio news box."

News has always been part of the medium of wireless transmission.[33] Because broadcasters weren't generally altruistic, they sought out listeners. The provision of news was one of the ways larger audiences were achieved. Mitchell Stephens pointed this out when he spoke of the early days of broadcasting:

> Radio was far from exclusively a news medium (nor is print or the newspaper itself, for that matter) but news gained, and would maintain, a position second only to music as a staple of radio programming.[34]

It was through the provision of news, predominantly on local stations, that a new information avenue was opened for listeners. As Barnouw wrote: "Since the dawn of history, each new medium has tended to undermine an old monopoly, shift the definitions of greatness, and alter the climate of men's lives."[35] Thus, radio news broke the information monopoly long held by newspapers.[36] It was these "monopoly-busting" tactics during the 1920s that, although not specifically planned, lead to the battles with the press which culminated in the so-called press-radio war in the 1930s.[37]

Despite claims to the contrary, news and newscasts during the 1920s could be found on more than a mere handful of stations, especially those that remained local in focus.[38] This was especially true after the passage of the Federal Radio Act in 1927 which decreed that radio was to be "in the public interest." As Mitchell Charnley wrote:

> From the broadcaster's point of view ... news programs had two appreciable advantages: they helped build up a station's, or a network's, hours of public service programming; and they were easy and inexpensive to put on the air.[39]

For that reason local stations became even more actively involved in the provision of news. Nevertheless, when scholars have spoken of broadcast news in the 1920s, their usual comments have been far from complimentary or correct; for example: early radio took news as it came[40], in the beginning news didn't play an important part in the schedule of any radio station except those owned by newspaper as there were no news gathering sources available to radio[41], daily news was not a regular feature of radio in the 1920s[42], it wasn't until the start of the Second World War that radio became an important news medium[43], radio pioneers barely appreciated radio's abilities as a news medium[44], and contemporary news programming didn't exist during the 1920s and early 1930s.[45] These views are somewhat simplistic and they ignore the facts contained in the secondary sources themselves. Throughout the decade the amount of news and number of newscasts in the United States continued to swell[46] to the point that news flashes came to be common.[47]

Most of the secondary sources refer primarily to the following stations when considering broadcast news in the 1920s. 8MK, the precursor to WWJ, was set up by the Detroit News in 1920 with the express purpose of broadcasting news bulletins called the Town Crier.[48] It's first broadcast took place on August 31, 1920 with early returns of Michigan primary voting.[49] Subsequently, the station broadcast local and regional news from the paper's staff, national and international news from the press services.[50] Similarly, KDKA's first broadcast was news-oriented: election results of the Harding-Cox presidential election.[51] Newscasts remained semi-weekly newscasts until December 1, 1920 when they became daily.[52] WJZ had regular newscasts as early as 1921, its first year of operation.[53] By 1923 it had a daily 15-minute news resume.[54] WJAC (Norfolk) began noontime newscasts on July 26, 1922. WGY began a 15-minute news synopsis on February 3, 1923.[55] KOIN (Portland) created its "Newspaper on the Air" in 1925.[56] KFAB (Nebraska) began running editions of its "Newspaper of the Air" in December 1928.[57] WOMT (Manitowoc, Wisconsin) started "news every hour on the hour" in 1929.[58] In 1930, KMPC (Beverley Hills) became the first known station to hire reporters and set up beats in the Los Angeles area[59]; it began broadcasting three 15-minute daily newscasts called "The Radio Service of America."[60]

However, beyond those oft-referred to stations, there appear to be many stations broadcasting news during the 1920s. For example, KSD (St. Louis), owned by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, had newscasts from its first day of continual broadcasting: March 11, 1922.[61] By 1926 the station provided approximately six news bulletins and market reports per day[62] as well as special news broadcasts.[63] The station received news scheduled for printing in the following day's edition of the Post-Dispatch; thus, the radio news wasn't stale.

Other stations owned by newspapers probably had the same advantage as did those stations which were able to receive copy from local newspapers or wire services -- which was the vast majority. Initially, most stations used newspaper, wire service and magazine stories as freely as they played records, and "... because credit was usually given, the practice was condoned, even encouraged".[64] Even when this practice came under heavy attack, it remained prevalent: "Local newspapers furnished news to local radio stations, and networks obtained news from news-gathering organizations."[65] In New York City, most stations were receiving news for broadcast from local newspapers in the 1920s; for example, WOR from the Telegram, WRNY from the Sun, WJZ from the American, and WHN from the Mirror.[66]

News broadcasting also began on many other stations. WFAA (Dallas) began newscasting from its first day of operation in 1922 and the amount increased substantially over the next four years[67]. WCAQ (Shreveport), the forerunner of KWKM, had news from 1922.[68] WLW (Cincinnati) began news broadcasts in 1923.[69] WCX (Detroit) had a news broadcast similar to that of WWJ.[70] In Chicago, KYW also started broadcasting news in 1922[71]; other Chicago stations, such as WMAQ, WGN and WLS, did the same when they went on the air.[72] Gleason Archer, said this about Chicago radio: "News flashes, with happenings, local and nation-wide -- even world wide -- are sure-fire hits in Chicago or anywhere else."[73] This comment provides further evidence that radio news was used frequently in the 1920s around the United States.

In addition, KGEZ (Kalispell, Montana) had a radio news bureau installed in its station in 1929.[74] Similarly, a 24-hour news service was launched on November 28, 1923 to provide reports every half-hour except when special events were being broadcast.[75] This would also seem to suggest that many more stations were broadcasting news.

Lastly, it's important to point out that local stations, whether network-affiliated or not, had been and continued to be active in providing news programming: "Interestingly enough, there seems to have been more interest in news broadcasting in local stations around the country than there was in the pilot stations of the networks."[76] By 1926 news had become a definite format on these local stations[77] who were also developing a reputation for spot coverage, for providing news while it was news.[78] By contrast, network news was almost non-existent. Although it's significant that CBS offered a daily 5-minute news broadcast toward the end of the decade[79] and that NBC began to offer a 15-minute nightly newscast in 1930[80], the networks were, throughout the last years of the 1920s, reluctant participants.[81]

Radio news, however, was far from confined to newscasting.[82]

"Oral editorials"[83], or news commentaries, were born in 1923 when WEAF hired H.V. Kaltenborn of the Brooklyn Eagle to provided a regular weekly interpretation and analysis of the news.[84] Commentaries also appeared on NBC starting in the 1926-1927 season with a weekly show called the Political Situation Tonight with Frederick William Wile.[85] The next season NBC hired David Lawrence to do commentaries called "Our Government" and James G. MacDonald to do a show called "The World Today."[86] In 1929, NBC hired William Hard to do commentaries entitled "Back of the News in Washington" after Wile left to do commentaries at CBS.[87] These commentators were identified by name so as to build a loyal audience.[88]

News also appeared in other non-traditional forms. In January 1925, Pathé News signed some fairly good stations to broadcast a tie-in with its film news-reels.[89] Similarly, on October 1, 1928, Time Magazine initiated a tie-in program of daily 10-minute news summaries entitled "NewsCasting."[90] The scripts of the programs were syndicated by airmail to the participating stations; 60 at the outset, 90 by 1929.[91] Additionally, a form of dramatized news appeared in 1929: two five-minute transcriptions were prepared each week and airmailed to over 100 participating stations in areas as far apart as Florida and Hawaii.[92]

Sports news, or the coverage of news of athletic events, was regularly broadcast by the early 1920s because it was "made to order for a medium whose strongest attribute is coverage as it happens."[93] Live baseball broadcasts began on KDKA on August 4, 1921[94] and one month later the first World Series game was covered.[95] By 1926 the World Series was broadcast to a national audience by WJZ[96] and baseball, as a sport, was given more air-time than any other.[97] Football was first broadcast -- in morse code -- on November 25, 1920 by 5XB.[98] By the end of 1922, WOR was broadcasting a football game every Saturday and WGI (Medford Hillside, Mass.) was broadcasting all the games from Harvard Stadium.[99] NBC also relied on football to help establish its audience; its first substantial broadcasts following its inauguration involved football games.[100] National coverage began with the 1927 Rose Bowl.[101] Boxing was first covered on September 6, 1920[102] but the first major boxing broadcast occurred on July 2, 1921. It was the "Fight of the Century" between American heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey and French Champion Georges Carpentier.[103] Starting in 1923 the following sports were also broadcast on a variety of stations: polo[104], college basketball[105], hockey[106] Davis Cup tennis matches[107], horse races[108], golf tournaments[109], The Indianapolis 500[110], boat races[111], wrestling[112], and swimming.[113] All of this was in addition to the regular coverage of sports news such as scores. The incredible growth of these sports into mass-spectator events can be seen as a direct byproduct of the broadcasting revolution.[114] Radio helped create myths about legendary sports figures; many became larger-than-life.[115]

Another areas in which radio news was able to shine during the 1920s, even before the introduction of regular news staffs, was political news.[116] The nation was already accustomed to hearing the voice of President Harding[117] when on November 23, 1923, the eve of Armistice Day, listeners were astounded "... to hear the feeble voice of a dying ex-president [Wilson] speaking to them from the library of his home in Washington."[118] The ability of a president to speak to his constituents on such a personal basis could hardly be conceived of:

> America's citizenry could now be gathered around their radios, and America's chief executive regained a privilege most tribal chiefs had taken for granted: his voice could reach a significant proportion of those he governed.[119]

Being able to "speak with" their chief executive, as well as being able to hear political speeches, public forums, and political news "awakened the citizen's consciousness and duties under democracy by arousing his interest in government."[120] This awakening was further heightened when the openings of Congress began to be broadcast in 1923[121] and when CBS began providing coverage of Cabinet meetings, congressional hearings and other governmental proceedings late in the decade.[122]

Similarly, political conventions received a national stage when the Republican and Democratic national conventions were first broadcast in 1924.[123] Although radio wasn't used very much during the campaign, Coolidge did make an election-eve broadcast, the first major broadcast designed purposefully to affect the political process.[124] It reached an estimated 20 to 30 million people on 26 stations.[125] Election results of Coolidge's victory were also broadcast to an estimated 20 million audience on 400 stations, coast-to-coast.[126] Likewise, his inauguration speech was also broadcast.[127]

This election marked a turning point in the presentation of elections: "Elaborate methods were adopted ... to bring the latest returns and expert commentaries and the trends as they developed in local, state, and national contests."[128] Thus, the effect of this election on radio was more important than the effect of radio on the election: radio developed modern methods for delivering news to its listeners.[129] But most important was the effect on the American population:

> ... the very fact that by the magic of radio the President himself could come into their homes and tell them of the national problems could not help but revivify personal interest of the common people in the affairs of government.[130]

Proof of this revivification, of greater participation in political and social life, can be found in the 1928 presidential election: eight million more people cast ballots in 1928 than in 1924, "... proof positive of the political interest aroused by radio..."[131] Both national conventions, the campaign speeches, and Hoover's inaugural address were broadcast; the address gathering a 60 million audience.[132] Election night coverage was competitively broadcast by both NBC and CBS; CBS won that battle by calling the election one hour before NBC.[133] AP, UP, INS[134] and local newspapers all provided the networks and individual stations with results.[135]

Major news events were also broadcast; radio was the "... father of on-the-scene news programming."[136] For example, the legal process came to the attention of many listeners in 1925 when the Scopes "Monkey" trial was broadcast by WGN (Chicago) from Dayton, Tennessee at a cost of $1,000/day.[137] Similarly, when Charles Lindbergh was flying solo across the Atlantic in 1927, people tuned into their radios first for the latest news. When he successfully returned there was coverage of his homecoming parade, hosted by President Coolidge, as well as the parade in his honor in New York City.[138] Likewise, there were broadcasts of important funerals such as those of Presidents Wilson and Harding.[139] Disaster also received attention; for example, WLS (Chicago) included news bulletins about a tornado on March 18, 1925.[140]

Many of these "specialty" news broadcasts involved experimentation, they were cumulative efforts that made the industry as a whole better on each successive broadcast. By the middle of the decade, radio began beating the press at its own game: fast reporting of news and information much to the chagrin of slower paced newspapers.[141] Nevertheless, the conventional wisdom is that most newspaper owners, whether or not they had invested in radio, didn't regard radio as a competitor although some believed it could help circulation[142] while others believed it had no effect.[143] Almost all devoted a substantial portion of editorial space to the new medium[144]:

> So little did the newspaper owners fear radio that they cheerfully accorded the broadcasters a courtesy long denied (in effect) by most periodicals to motion picture exhibitors, theatrical producers, and book publishers: free announcement of scheduled attractions without the usual quid pro quo of paid advertisements.[145]

While newspapers may have taken the unusual position of providing free space to the nascent broadcasting industry, it was a necessary condition to maintain readership. If coverage of radio was eliminated, circulation would decrease as would advertising revenue. It was a catch-22 situation. Consequently, to say that newspapers didn't fear radio simply because space was given is another simplistic viewpoint.

Certainly, some newspapers owners recognized that radio was a potentially powerful news medium. From the outset, some owners invested in the new technology because it was seen as a useful supplemental arm to their print operations.[146] By incorporating radio into their operations, these newspaper owners hoped to co-opt a potential opponent. This attitude was by no means the norm, though.[147] Only 69 newspapers had invested in radio stations by the end of 1922.[148] That number dropped to 58 in 1924[149] and was still less than 90 by 1930.[150] Stanley F. Barnett commented:

> During this expansive era, newspaper publishers pretty generally were slow to recognize the presence and potentialities of this great new medium. Although the press helped to build up radio broadcasting, it failed to grasp the full opportunity the new method offered for extending the power of the daily newspaper.[151]

Not only were newspapers losing a potential weapon to extend their power, the low ownership figures throughout the decade ensured that the press would have very little leverage with which to control the large contingent of independent, local stations.

A more appropriate viewpoint regarding the newspaper industry's reaction would be that it was extremely fearful of the rise of radio, especially as a news medium. Many newspaper owners feared the death of newspapers at the hands of radio; they wondered why people would buy newspapers if fresh news was available for free over the airwaves.[152] Newspapers were generally opposed to radio news as an encroachment upon their news domains, and as a threat to their financial well-being.[153] News Broadcasting was, thus, seen and feared as a threat to the newspaper information monopoly even at a time when the radio audience was relatively small.[154]

This fear can be found in the actions of the AP which began to face the spectre of serious competition, not only from other wire services but from another medium.[155] Several actions were taken within wire service during the 1920s, all of which could be directly attributed to radio: first, there was a shift in emphasis away from the reliance on hard news -- more human interest stories appeared; second, a science editor was appointed; and finally, for the first times, AP reporters were allowed to use bylines.[156] More importantly, AP began a long and concerted battle to stop radio news on February 20, 1922 when it asked its 1,200 members not to provide copy to radio stations.[157] Such an action, at that stage of radio's development, doesn't correspond with an industry that felt safe. In fact, the time frame was consistent with the growing antagonism to news broadcasting which was already well-developed in the newspaper industry.

The ban had no effect, however. Although AP did threaten the New York Sun with expulsions for providing news to radio stations, it was a hollow threat.[158] Radio stations owned by AP-affiliated newspapers did not respect the ban while unaffiliated newspaper-owned stations and stations that had nothing to do with newspapers were still able to get copy from UP, INS or local newspapers. In fact, during the 1920s, UP, INS and many newspapers willingly gave their copy to both networks and individual stations.[159] Further, AP was helpless if radio stations found their own news.[160] By 1924, AP was forced to retreat by allowing baseball scores to be broadcast by all stations[161]; an indication that AP defined news broadly and justifies the use of such a definition herein.

Despite this specific retreat, AP-affiliated stations continued to broadcast news. For example, the Portland Oregonian admitted its station broadcast returns of the 1924 presidential election. It received a meaningless $100 fine.[162] The New York Sun was similarly cited.[163] In fact, many stations owned by AP-affiliates violated the ban by obtaining the results from UP or other sources, including the stations owned by the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Daily News, the Chicago Herald Examiner, the Chicago Evening Post, the New York American, the Brooklyn Eagle, the Memphis Commercial Appeal, the Portland Oregonian, the Detroit Free Press, the Fort Worth Star Telegram, and the Kansas City Star.[164] Also, many non-AP-affiliated stations received the 1924 election results from UP and INS.[165] An estimated 10 million listeners heard the results via radio before receiving them in their newspaper.[166] The continued availability of news from INS and UP forced another AP retreat in 1925: all stations were allowed to broadcast stories of no more than 35 words if they were of "transcendent importance."[167]

With fear rising in the industry, the American Newspaper Publishers Association joined the battle in 1925. It ordered its member papers to stop publishing free radio logs when the sponsors name appeared in the program title.[168] Similarly, the New York Press Association moved to ban radio listings in 1927 unless regular advertising rates were paid. Other newspapers, especially those not owning radio stations, did the same. However, those listing and stories soon re-appeared as listeners stopped buying papers and sought the listings elsewhere.[169] The catch-22 was asserting itself.

The battle entered a new phase with the appearance of NBC in 1926 and CBS in 1927.[170] These networks were in the business of making money through advertising[171], and thereby began to take chunks out of the finite advertising pie:

Advertising Expenditures in Radio and Newspapers, 1927-1930[172]
(in millions of dollars)

	Radio	Newspapers	Total	Radio's Percentage
1927	5	775	780	0.6%
1928	20	760	780	2.6%
1929	40	800	840	4.8%
1930	60	700	760	7.9%

As is apparent, despite the blip in total advertising in 1929, radio's percentage of total advertising, even in 1929, was increasing at an accelerating rate. When this loss of revenue is combined with the increasing labor, paper and machinery costs in the newspaper industry at the end of the decade[173], many owners must have been frantic, especially after the Depression began.

It should not be surprising, therefore, that AP was quite disturbed, and very bitter[174], by the fact that it spent $250,000 covering the 1928 election which radio stations, including the networks, reported on without incurring any substantial costs.[175] After the election, the newspaper-business organ bemoaned the rising radio tide:

> Far be it for Editor and Publisher to attempt to build a dam of pebbles to hold back the onsweeping radio tide; if after election night the newspaper publishers of this country do not realize that they are making a most stupendous and wholly gratuitous contribution to a competing medium than nothing said in these columns would bring home that fact ... To us it was nothing short of amazing that the broadcasters were even permitted to read the "news

> leads" written for publication in newspapers ... But the newspaper, apparently, is only a queer kind of business which gives its product away to a competitor, and stands idly by to see a natural and rightful function supplanted.[176]

It was obvious to many industry that they were losing the battle to keep their information monopoly, but what must have been even more infuriating was the industry itself seemed to be hastening the process. In response, AP joined with UP and INS later that year to provide two newscasts per day to radio stations, the purpose being to keep mainly to stop individual stations and/or the networks from taking the next step: forming a news-gathering organization. But even this became impossible, AP had to pull back with a,

> ... relaxation of prohibitions against members' broadcast of news to prevent members from getting news from other sources. But this was only a halfway measure. It had effect only on radio stations with direct connection with AP papers, a relatively small number. And the AP had no effective policing method. The policy had little force.[177]

The result of this ineffectual policy was the fairly free sale of news to radio stations by 1929.[178] A desperate effort would be made in the early 1930s to restore the newspaper's previous position. But it was futile: the monopoly had already been lost. Considering the commercial interests that had battled against radio news programming, radio's victory was all the more striking.[179]

In conclusion, many radio stations, perhaps even a large majority, had news broadcasts in the 1920s. These stations generally borrowed the news-gathering operations of local newspapers and/or wire services at their disposal -- a fact that distressed many in the newspaper business. While it's not contested that in the 1920s most stations had no reporters and many simply had the news read out of a newspaper or from wire copy[180], the fact remains that there was news -- of all sorts -- which reached millions of listeners every day by the end of the decade. Certainly radio news broadcasts can be faulted on many grounds if the standards of contemporary techniques are imposed. However, it must be remembered that these broadcasts were potentially far superior to anything that existed before. This was an apprentice period for radio. Broadcasters were learning the craft of news, and they learned very well.[181]

Despite the seemingly harsh criticisms of broadcast news in the 1920s, by the end of the decade radio was able to utilize its inherent immediacy to disseminate information quickly to vast masses of people. Often radio stations beat newspapers at its own game: they provided news while it was news. More importantly, these broadcasts were a new source of useful information; information about public events, sports, politics. These broadcasts increased the knowledge of the average listener, especially those in rural areas. Radio also gave listeners the ability to become part of other worlds; worlds previously closed to them. Now they could hear what speakers were saying and how they were saying it, if they were confident or anxious, sad or happy. They could base their decisions, opinions and conclusions on elements that were simply unavailable in a newspaper. Thus, as a result of the medium's inherent characteristics and through the provision of news, radio broke the newspaper monopoly on information. It thereby fostered, at least in part, an increase in democracy at the national level, and almost certainly at both the state and local level.

Lastly, the provision of radio news helped create a viable mass medium. By the end of the decade millions of Americans across the country were listening to radio newscasts. It was a national audience. This national audience started to form as early as 1922 because radio listeners were already becoming accustomed to receiving news on the radio. They developed a pattern of listening: when something important was happening, had happened or was going to happen, listeners turned to their radios. And because it was a national audience, a national pattern developed. It is trite to say that not everyone is listening at the same time or that everyone who is listening is tuning in to the same program. Nevertheless, with a potential audience of at least 40 million people in 1929, radio was destined to have a tremendous impact on an audience which had developed a pattern of listening. For a person to understand the world that was developing around him, or even to understand his neighbor, that person also had to tune in to radio. It became a new common language, a common means of communication, a common means of information, and a common means of knowledge. To be in the know, to share in the commonness, to be part of the community, it became necessary to tune in.

There are many more sources that could still be culled for further insight. Even having every published secondary source, however, would not provide the whole picture. Primarily this is due to their macroscopic manner. Therefore, a more comprehensive review of unpublished theses and dissertations concerning the development and workings of local and rural stations should be undertaken since they represent an untapped repository of information that could shed far more light on what stations were actually doing at the local level. In addition, there may be some primary sources still in existence. For example, it is possible that transcriptions or recordings may have survived during the past 75 years which could possibly additional information concerning the provision of news during the decade.

More could be said about the birth of radio news. It is a story that should be told: to fully understand the dislocating effects that today's new information technologies are having on entrenched industries, one must first understand the effects occasioned by the first such technology -- radio.

ENDNOTES

1.Quoted in Edward Bliss, **Now the News: The Story of Broadcast Journalism** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 5. The main purpose was to sell RCA-manufactured radios. Much early broadcasting was designed to be a marketing tool: to rephrase an old cliché: "if you build stations, they will buy receivers". Others built stations simply for goodwill or educational purposes: Daniel J. Czitrom, **Media and The American Mind: From Morse to McLuhan** (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 72 [hereinafter Czitrom].

2.For example, the audio collection of the broadcasting museum in Chicago begins in the mid-1930s.

3. Eugene S. Foster, **Understanding Broadcasting**, 2nd ed. (Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1982) [hereinafter Foster], Sydney W. Head and Christopher H. Sterling, **Broadcasting in America: A Survey of the Electronic Media**, 5th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987) [Head and Sterling], and F. Leslie Smith, **Perspectives on Radio and Television: Telecommunications in the United States**, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985) [hereinafter Leslie Smith].

4.Erik Barnouw, **A Tower in Babel: A History of Broadcasting in the United States** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966) [hereinafter A Tower in Babel], Irving Settel, **A Pictorial History of Radio** (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1967) [hereinafter Settel], G.E.C. Wedlake, **SOS: The Story of Radio-Communication** (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1973) [hereinafter Wedlake], John Tebbel, **The Media in America** (New York: Mentor Books, 1974) [hereinafter Tebbel] and Wm. David Sloan, et al., **The Media in America: A History**, 2nd ed. (Arizona: Publishing Horizons, Inc., 1993).

5. **A Thirty-Year History of Programs Carried on National Radio Networks in the United States**, Harrison B. Summers, ed. (New York: Arno Press, 1971) [hereinafter A Thirty-Year History], Frank Buxton and Bill Owen, **The Big Broadcast, 1920-1950** (New York: The Viking Press, 1972) [The Big Broadcast], Robert Campbell, **The Golden Years of Broadcasting: A Celebration of the First 50 Years of Radio and TV on NBC** (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976) [hereinafter Campbell], J. Fred MacDonald, **Don't Touch That Dial: Radio Programming in American Life, 1920-1960** (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, Inc., 1979) [hereinafter MacDonald], and Curtis Mitchell, **Cavalcade of Broadcasting** (Chicago: Follet Publishing Company, 1970) [hereinafter Mitchell].

6.Mitchell V. Charnley, **News By Radio** (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948) [hereinafter Charnley], Edward Bliss, **Now the News: The Story of Broadcast Journalism** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) [hereinafter Bliss], Oliver Grambling, **AP: The Story of News** (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1940) [hereinafter Grambling], Frank Luther Mott's **American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 260 Years, 1690 to 1950**, rev.ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950) [hereinafter Mott], and Mitchell Stephens, **A History of the News** (New York: Penguin Books, 1988) [hereinafter Stephens].

7.Gleason L. Archer, "Conventions, Campaigns and Kilocycles in 1924: The First Political Broadcasts," **Journal of Broadcasting** 4 (1959/60): 110 [hereinafter Archer], Thomas W. Bohn, "Broadcasting National Elections Returns: 1916-1948," **Journal of Broadcasting** 12 (1968): 267 [hereinafter Bohn], David G. Clark, "Radio in Presidential Campaigns: The Early Years (1924-1932)," **Journal of Broadcasting** 6 (1961/62): 229 [hereinafter Clark], and Lewis E. Weeks, "The Radio Election of 1924," **Journal of Broadcasting** 8 (1963/64): 233 [hereinafter Weeks].

8.R. Franklin Smith, "The Nature and Development of Commentary," **Journal of Broadcasting** 6 (1961/62): 11 [hereinafter Franklin Smith] and Robert R. Smith, "The Origins of Radio Network News Commentary," **Journal of Broadcasting** 9 (1964/65): 113 [hereinafter Robert Smith].

9.Stanley F. Barnett, "The Press and Radio: Past and Future," **Journalism Quarterly** 20 (1943): 326 [hereinafter Barnett], Russel J. Hammargren, "The Origin of the Press-Radio Conflict," **Journalism Quarterly** 13 (1936): 91 [hereinafter Hammargren], George E. Lott, "The Press-Radio War of the 1930s," **Journal of Broadcasting** 14 (1969/70): 275 [hereinafter Lott], Rudolph D. Michael, "History and Criticism of Press-Radio Relationships," **Journalism Quarterly** 15 (1938): 178 [hereinafter Michael], and Herbert Moore, "The News War in the Air," **Journalism Quarterly** 12 (1935): 43 [hereinafter Moore].

10.Some have argued that KDKA was not the first broadcasting station in the United States. For a discussion, see Joseph E. Baudino and John M. Kittross, "Broadcasting Oldest Stations: An Examination of Four Claimants," **Journal of Broadcasting** 21 (1977): 61. However, none of those claimants was the first commercial broadcaster in North America. That honor goes to XWA (Montreal). It broadcast a music program from Montreal to Ottawa on May 20, 1920. Later that year it received the call letters CFCF, the letters it still uses today. See Mary Vipond, **Listening In: The First Decade of Canadian Broadcasting, 1922-1932** (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 3 and Donald G. Godfrey, "Canadian Marconi: CFCF, The Forgotten First," **Canadian Journal of Communication** 8 (1982): 59.

11.Charles A. Siepmann, **Radio, Television and Society** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), 5 [hereinafter Siepmann]. There is some confusion about this numbers. Stephens, 276, put that number at 576. Llewellyn White, **The American Radio: A Report on the Broadcasting Industry in the United States from the Commission on Freedom of the Press** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), 13 [hereinafter White], put the number at 556 in 1924. Frank W. Peers, **The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting, 1920-1951** (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 6, puts it at 556 in 1923. Mitchell, 79, said 1,440 licenses were issued in 1922 and 1923. Wedlake, 133, says 1,400 licenses had been issued by the end of 1924. Czitrom, 72, puts the number at 570 granted licenses. William Peck Banning, **Commercial Broadcasting Pioneer: The WEAF Experiment, 1922-1926** (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1946), 132 [hereinafter Banning], said there were 576 stations on February 1, 1923. Austin E. Weir, **The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada** (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1965), 2, says there were 530 operating stations in 1920 out of the 1,105 licenses that had been issued. The matter is further complicated by the fact that many stations were extremely short-lived. Czitrom, at 72, says 94 stations had shut down by the end of 1922.

12.Herbert I. Schiller, **Mass Communications and American Empire** (New York: Augustus M. Kelly, Publishers, 1969), 24 [hereinafter Schiller] and Vincent Mosco, **Broadcasting in the United States: Innovative Challenge and Organizational Control** (New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1979), 7 [hereinafter Mosco].

13.Leslie Smith, 35. The percentage of American homes with radio grew to 90% by 1950: Siepmann, 82.

14.From O.H. Caldwell, "The Radio Market," in **Radio and Its Future**, Martin Codel ed. (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 206 [hereinafter Caldwell]. Another reason for the expansion of the radio market was the introduction of car radios in 1927: Wedlake, 159. John W. Spalding, "1928: Radio Becomes a Mass Advertising Medium," **Journal of Broadcasting** 8 (1963/64): 31, 36 [hereinafter Spalding], indicates that in 1928-29 there were 11,032,855 receivers in 9,640,348 homes reaching a total audience of 41,453,469.

15.On January 2, 1921 KDKA made the first church broadcast from the Calvary Episcopal Church: MacDonald, 6 and Wedlake at 153. George H. Douglas, **The Early Days of Radio Broadcasting** (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1987), 28 [hereinafter Douglas], claims WJZ (Newark) made the first such broadcast on December 24, 1921. Settel, 41, claims WJZ made the first such broadcast in January 1922.

On January 15, 1921 KDKA made the first political broadcast with a speech by Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover: see Wedlake, 153. Similarly, in May, 1922 WJH (Washington) presented the first political debate. It dealt with daylight savings time: MacDonald, 6.

On August 28, 1922 WEAF (NYC) made its first "toll" broadcast: see Wedlake, 157 and Head and Sterling, 57. The station was owned by American Telephone & Telegraph (AT&T). It opened in New York City on August 3, 1922: Wedlake, 157. But according to Head and Sterling, 57, did not go on the air until August 16.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In October, 1922 WGY (Schenectady) presented the first radio drama, The Wolf: see MacDonald, 6 and Donald G. Godfrey, "Radio Comes of Age, 1900-1945," **The Media in America: A History**, 2nd ed., Wm. David Sloan, et al. eds. (Arizona: Publishing Horizons, Inc., 1993), 377 [hereinafter Godfrey]. But G. Howard Poteet, **Radio!** (Ohio: Pflaum Publishing, 1975), 37 [hereinafter Poteet], says the play started on August 3, 1922. The play was written by Eugene Walter: Edgar E. Willis, "Sound Effects: A Look Into the Past," **Journal of Broadcasting** 1 (1956/57): 328, 328 [hereinafter Willis]. Some have spelled the title as "The Wolfe". This broadcast was followed by 83 dramas in two seasons on WGY. Godfrey, 377, says WGY presented 200 Broadway plays. These dramas were also the stimulus for other stations to either hire professional drama troupes or create their own; for example, KGO (Oakland) created its own drama unit while WGBS (Astoria, N.Y.) began producing several dramas a week. WGY was owned by General Electric: Godfrey, 372.

Finally, in 1922 President Harding became the first president to broadcast on radio when he made a speech from Baltimore dedicating a monument to Francis Scott Key: see Bliss, 17. Wedlake, 158, Clark, 230 and Godfrey, 380, say President Harding made his first radio speech on January 21, 1923 from St. Louis on the proposed World Court. Edward W. Chester, **Radio, Television and American Politics** (New York: Steed and Ward, Inc., 1969), 15 [hereinafter Chester], says Harding's first speech was on November 5, 1921. Perhaps this broadcast was not recognized because its audience was not the United States -- it was other countries in the world. And it was successful: it was heard in Norway, Germany, France, England, Italy, Canada, Belgium, Sweden, Hawaii, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Columbia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama and Cuba. However, President Wilson was actually the first to use the medium while in office. He had his voice carried in 1920 but only on naval equipment: MacDonald, 7.

16.Lawrence W. Lichty, and Malachi C. Topping, **American Broadcasting: A Sourcebook of the History of Radio and Television** (New York: Hastings House, Publishers, Inc., 1975), 294 [hereinafter Lichty and Topping].

17.Sound recordings were scorned. Live music and other programs were considered one of the major assets of radio: Head and Sterling, 79. This is not to suggest that recordings were not used. Leslie Smith, 20 and Head and Sterling, 72. MacDonald, 10, put the actual percentage of music broadcasts at over 60.

18.Head and Sterling, 55. For a history of radio drama see: Donald, W. Riley, "A History of American Radio Drama from 1919-1944," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Ohio State University, 1944. Also, stations owned by radio manufacturers often had special lectures concerning the technical aspects of radio: Czitrom, 73.

19.Mitchell, 76.

20.At the time networks were called chains. The first network broadcast in the United States was put together by AT&T's WEAF (NYC) and WNAC (Boston) on January 4, 1923: White, 14 and Godfrey, 372. Poteet, 6, says it was on January 3, 1923. Because of complicated patent agreements, AT&T was the only company allowed to charge tolls, or advertising, during broadcasts unless a license fee was paid: Head and Sterling, 56 and Leslie Smith, 20. However, by 1923, 93% of all stations were selling time in violation of the patents; a fact that was partially responsible for AT&T's withdrawal from radio: Head and Sterling, 58. WEAF would later become WRCA and WNBC: Erik Barnouw, **Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 44 [hereinafter Tube of Plenty]. Prior to opening WEAF, AT&T opened WBAY (Manhattan) but it closed for technical reasons: Mitchell, 74.

21.National Broadcasting Company. It was a fully-owned subsidiary of RCA (Head and Sterling, 59) which was formed after AT&T pulled out of the radio business and sold WEAF to RCA for the incredible amount of $1 million: Foster, 71. AT&T also agreed to provide RCA with the exclusive rights to lease telephone lines and charge tolls for its broadcasts. NBC lost this exclusivity in 1927 with the creation of CBS. This was not a voluntary decision: the company wanted to avoid monopoly charges. In any event, AT&T was guaranteed to earn vast profits.

NBC made its maiden broadcast on November 15, 1926 on 25 stations in 21 cities. In January 1927, NBC split its main network in two as it now had duplicate stations in some major markets: NBC-Red comprising the stations of old AT&T network and anchored by WEAF and NBC-Blue comprising the stations of the RCA network and anchored by WJZ: Foster, 71 and Tube of Plenty, 5. NBC-Orange on the West Coast was also in place by the end of the year: Spalding, 33. The color designations represented the colors used on the early network charts. NBC-Blue never reached the same stature as NBC-Red which led to claims that NBC was keeping the network to stifle competition. It was eventually sold in 1943 to Edward J. Noble, the LifeSaver candy king, who renamed the network the American Broadcasting Company: Erik Barnouw, **The Golden Web: A History of Broadcasting in the United States, 1933-1953** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 187-190 [hereinafter The Golden Web].

22.Columbia Broadcasting System. It went on the air September 18, 1927 but floundered until it was purchased by William S. Paley, the 26-year-old heir to the Congress Cigar Company fortune, in September 1928: Head and Sterling, 59. For a complete history of CBS see: Lewis J. Paper, **Empire: William S. Paley and the Making of CBS** (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987) [hereinafter Paper].

23.See, for example, A Thirty-Year History, The Big Broadcast and Campbell.

24.It, nevertheless, had many of the same programming elements. See, Ibid.

25.And stations with construction permits.

26.CBS had 16 affiliates while NBC had 48 on its Red and Blue networks: White, 35. Charnley, 16, says there 23 affiliated stations on NBC Red, 18 on NBC Blue, and 13 on CBS in 1927. NBC also had 7 stations on its Orange network: Spalding, 33.

27.White, 37 and Chase, 47. These included the Quality Network and the Amalgamated Network: Godfrey, 373. Some would emerged into dominant regional networks in the 1940s: The Golden Web, 32.

28.Head and Sterling, 70. See also Michele Hilmes, **Hollywood and Broadcasting: From Radio to Cable** (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 27 [hereinafter Hilmes]. She said that radio programs didn't take modern form until circa 1929: 61.

29.MacDonald, 11. See also Settel, 68: "Radio had taken root in the 1920s, and its branches rapidly expanded into all phases of American life. Both programming and listening during this decade were changing their patterns. Program personalities were beginning to attract loyal listeners. Obscure announcers and crooners became public heroes, to be idolized by millions of people who knew them only by voice."

30.Tebbel, 392. "It was a transformation of national life even more remarkable than the one produced by television."

31.Siepmann, 82-83.

32.Quoted in Murray Katzman, "News Broadcasting in the United States, 1920-1941," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1968, 28 [hereinafter Katzman].

33.The term "wireless transmission" is used here because news was sent by wireless means before it was possible to transmit voices. For example, in 1898 the Dublin Daily Express received a minute-by-minute, wireless Morse Code account of the Kingston Regatta as did the New York Herald, with respect to the America's Cup, in 1899. See A Tower in Babel, 13 and Bliss, 2. See also Lott, 275. Voice transmission of news first occurred in occurred in 1909 on the experimental station of Charles D. Herold. It appeared again in 1915 on the experimental station of Harold J. Power: Tube of Plenty, 34-35. And again in 1916 when the New York American strung a wire to the Lee de Forest plant in Highbridge in order that bulletins of the 1916 presidential election be broadcast: Gleason L. Archer, **History of Radio to 1926** (New York: The American Historical Society, 1938), 134 [hereinafter History of Radio].

34.Stephens, 277.

35.See Harold A. Innis, **Empire and Communications** (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1972) and **The Bias of Communication** (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1971).

36.Tower in Babel, 3.

37.Smith, 115. For all intents and purposes this battle started in 1922 and lasted well into the 1930s as will be discussed later.

38.For example, Isabelle Keating, writing in Harper's magazine in 1933, had this to say about the provision of radio news: "... it is sufficient here to point out that, while some of them are simply wishful thinking, others are in denial, deliberate or otherwise, of demonstrated facts. There can be no question but that radio can **and has** put a good deal more than a "smattering" of news on the air ... [emphasis added]: Quoted in Lott, 278.

39.Charnley, 8.

40.Lichty and Topping, 297.

41.Lawrence W. Lichty and Thomas W. Bohn, "Radio's March of Time: Dramatized News," in Lawrence W. Lichty and Malachi C. Topping, **American Broadcasting: A Sourcebook of the History of Radio and Television** (New York: Hastings House, Publishers, Inc., 1975), 324 [hereinafter Lichty and Bohn].

42.Douglas, 98.

43.Foster, 75.

44.Giraud Chester and Garnet R. Garrison, **Radio and Television: An Introduction** (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950), 33.

45.Godfrey, 385. This seems oxymoronic.

46.MacDonald, 285.

47.Mott, 679.

48.Hammargren, 91 and A Tower in Babel, 138.

49.Charnley, 1, Bliss, 6 and Tower in Babel, 62-64. On October 21, 1921, 8MK received its commercial license as WBL and on March 3, 1922 it received the call letters WWJ.

50.Charnley, 1-2. A pattern that was no doubt followed elsewhere.

51.KDKA received the election results from the Pittsburgh Post wire service room: Stephens, 277. Harding won the election. Leo Rosenberg, who, as a 24-year-old, read those returns, commented on that night 56 years later: "Most writers have treated this as an isolated incident but it proved to be a much greater 'first' with a tremendous impact on journalism": quoted in Bliss, 9. By 1940, Leo Rosenberg was working for NBC-TV: The Golden Web, 145.

52.Charnley, 3 and Tower in Babel, 71. KDKA also began to provide public affairs programs and market reports (Bliss, 6) as well as specific information for farmers (Settel, 50 and Godfrey, 381).

53.Douglas, 27 and Tower in Babel, 85.

54.MacDonald, 285 and E.P.J. Shurick, **The First Quarter-Century of American Broadcasting** (Kansas City: Midland Publishing Company, 1946), 136 [hereinafter Shurick]. Katzman, 27, says this show was hosted by Bill Slocum of the New York Herald.

55.Shurick, 136.

56.Sammy R. Danna, "The Rise of Radio News," in Lawrence W. Lichty and Malachi C. Topping, **American Broadcasting: A Sourcebook of the History of Radio and Television** (New York: Hastings House, Publishers, Inc., 1975), 338 [hereinafter Danna] and Shurick, 137.

57.Charnley, 9.

58.Danna, 338 and Shurick, 137.

59.Danna, 339.

60.Charnley, 9.

61.L. Clark Secrest, "The History of Radio Station KSD, St. Louis, Missouri, with Pertinent and Simultaneous References to the History of Broadcasting in America," Unpublished Master's Thesis, The University of Missouri -- Columbia, 1961, 40 hereinafter Secrest]. That same broadcast included a speech by Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover.

62.James H. Porchey, "A Historical Survey of Broadcasting in Missouri," Unpublished Master's Thesis, The University of Missouri -- Columbia, 1969, 14 [hereinafter Porchey]. The same was true of WOS (Jefferson City, Missouri) at least with respect to market reports: see Frank Wilson Currier, "The Story of Radio Station KWOS With Simultaneous References to U.S. Radio" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, The University of Missouri -- Columbia, 1968), 25. There is one difference though: WOS was not a commercial broadcaster.

63.Such as the November 11, 1922 Armistice Day speech by Missouri Governor Arthur M. Hyde: see Secrest, 68.

64.A Tower in Babel, 138. Bliss, 13, wrote that neither AP nor UP nor INS were initially concerned because they were always "plugged." However, this was not a universal sentiment, nor did it last long.

65.Moore, 45.

66."News Agencies Asked to Keep Off the Air." **Editor & Publisher**, 21 August 1926: 4.

67.George M. Stokes, A Public Service Program History of Radio Station WFAA-820," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1952 and Shurick, 136.

68.Lillian Hall Jones, "A Historical Study of Programming Techniques and Practices of Radio Station KWKH, Shreveport, Louisiana," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1959. News disappeared in 1925 when new owner W.K. Henderson made it his personal speaking post.

69.Tower in Babel, 133.

70.Maryland Waller Wilson, "Broadcasting by the Newspaper-Owned Stations in Detroit, 1920-1927," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1952 and Tower in Babel, 138.

71.History of Radio, 271 Tower in Babel, 89. They had a contract with INS to read their bulletins for a mention of the information's source.

72.Bruce A. Linton, "A History of Chicago Radio Station Programming, 1921-1931, with Emphasis on Stations WMAQ and WGN," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1953 [hereinafter Linton].

73.History of Radio, 272.

74.Shurick, 137.

75."Starts Radio News Service," **Editor & Publisher**, 1 December 1923: 43. It is unclear whether this service survived or for how long.

76.Douglas, 107 and Leslie Smith, 50.

77.Katzman, 58.

78.Moore, 45.

79.Paper, 67.

80.Head and Sterling, 73. Lowell Thomas was the anchor.

81.The Golden Web, 19.

82.Because the definition of what was news didn't necessarily follow the same guidelines that it does today, many events that were considered news in the 1920s may or may not be considered news today: see Poteet, 106. However, if one watches television or listens to radio, one would be surprised to see and hear the similarities.

83.Franklin Smith, 12.

84.Tube of Plenty, 48 and Campbell, 29. His commentaries were soon dropped from WEAF under pressure from the U.S. State Department. He later reappeared on CBS and then NBC: The Golden Web, 136. Before starting at WEAF, Kaltenborn appeared on WVP (Bedloe's Island): Shurick, 130.

85.Lichty and Bohn, 325. Wile first started his commentaries on WRC (Washington) in 1924: Shurick, 136 and Katzman, 27.

86.Katzman, 139 and 142. Lawrence was the founder of the United States Daily which in 1933 became the weekly U.S. News and World Report.

87.Ibid., 137, 143.

88.Robert Smith, 121.

89.Hilmes, 36.

90.Lichty and Bohn, 326.

91.Ibid. But Godfrey, 384, puts the number of stations at 33. Because of a mistake in the New York Times radio listings, the show was titled Newscasting -- apparently the first use of that word. This series came to be known as the March of Time.

92.Lichty and Bohn, 327.

93.Shurick, 119.

94.Bliss, 15 and Poteet, 111. Douglas, 114, says the game took place on Aug 5, 1921. The Pittsburgh Pirates defeated the Philadelphia Phillies 8 to 5 at Forbes Field.

95.On WJZ (Newark) on October 3, 1921: Douglas, 114. Tower in Babel, 84, says the game was broadcast on October 5. Godfrey, 378. The World Series been covered ever since. It was broadcast on NBC during the 1920s and 1930s: Campbell, 36.

96.Shurick, 122.

97.Bliss, 15 and Poteet, 111. For example, in 1925 WMAQ (Chicago) began broadcasting all Cub home games: Linton, 117 and Shurick, 121; and in 1927 WMAQ (Chicago) began broadcasting all White Sox games: Linton, 178. Even college baseball was broadcast; on WNAC (Boston): Shurick, 121.

98.Texas University v. Texas A & M. The station was the forerunner of WTAW. Shurick, 113.

99.MacDonald, 9.

100.Secrest, 114. These games were broadcast on November 20, 1926 (Harvard v. Yale) and November 27, 1926 (Army v. Navy).

101.Poteet, 112. Stanford v. Alabama. The Rose Bowl was broadcast on NBC: Campbell, 36.

102.The combatants were Jack Dempsey and Billy Miske: Poteet, 111. It was broadcast on WWJ. Godfrey, 378, says the first broadcast fight took place on KDKA in 1921 between Johnny Ray and Johnny Dundee.

103.Bliss, 15 and Mitchell, 69. It was broadcast from Boyle's Thirty Acres in Jersey City. Thousands of radio sets were bought just to hear this event which was broadcast by means of a temporary transmitter: Settel, 38. Ninety thousand people saw it live, up to 300,000 heard it: Poteet, 111. Westinghouse estimated the audience at 200,000: Charnley, 5.

104.In 1923 on WJZ: Shurick, 125.

105.In 1927 on WGL (Fort Wayne) and KGEZ (Kalispell, Montana): Ibid., 122.

106.In 1926 WEEI (Boston) covered all Boston Bruin games and WNAC (Boston) covered Canadian-American hockey league games: Ibid., 125.

107.The Davis Cup first appeared on KDKA on August 4, 1921: Douglas, 114.

108.The Kentucky Derby: Shurick, 118.

109.In 1926 on WNAC (Boston) and 1928 on WCAU (Philadelphia): Ibid., 124.

110.This 7-hour program was broadcast in 1924 over WGN (Chicago): Ibid., 117 and Godfrey, 379.

111.In 1928 the annual Harvard-Yale race was broadcast on NBC via WTIC (Hartford, Conn.): Shurick, 125.

112.In 1927 on WNAC (Boston): Ibid., 126.

113.In 1927 on KNX (Los Angeles): Ibid.

114.Douglas, 113. By 1922, most sports broadcasts were direct from site: MacDonald, 9.

115.Poteet, 113.

116.Douglas, 102-103.

117.Harding made frequent trips to the microphone after winning the presidency in 1920. He was intrigued by radio: Settel, 38.

118.Bliss, 17 and Tower in Babel 147. It was over the AT&T network. President Wilson was trying to convince the nation to join the League of Nations. Three months later the same network broadcast his funeral.

119.Stephens, 278.

120.Francis Chase Jr., **Sound and Fury: An Informal History of Broadcasting** (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), 288 [hereinafter Chase].

121.Mitchell, 76.

122.Paper, 67. This was an easy and cheap way to fill unsponsored time.

123.Over the AT&T and RCA networks: Bliss, 17. "This had never happened before, and politics in the United States would never be the same." The Democratic convention has been describes as a 17-day brawl: Bliss, 17. There was also a broadcast of Coolidge's acceptance speech. It was broadcast from Washington D.C. on August 14, 1925 and reached 15 states and an estimated 25 million audience: Weeks, 236.

124.On November 3, 1924. Weeks, 233 and Bliss, 18. But Weeks, 242, says the speech was non-partisan; it simply urged voters to vote.

125.Weeks, 233. "No man in history had ever spoken to so many at one time."

126.Bohn, 271.

127.On March 5, 1925. Bliss, 18-19 and Poteet, 106. The AT&T network received its election-night results from UP: Stephens, 277. Coolidge's inaugural address was the first to be broadcast. It was broadcast on the WEAF network: Campbell, 29. Coolidge defeated John W. Davis for the Democrats and Robert M. LaFollette for the Progressives.

128.Weeks, 242. Thus, it was the beginning of the coverage that is delivered today.

129.Ibid., 233.

130.Archer, 118. See also Katzman, 41.

131.Merlin Hall Aylesworth, "National Broadcasting," in **Radio and Its Future**, Martin Codel ed. (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 35.

132.Bliss, 17 and 24. This was the largest audience ever up to that point. Hoover's inauguration broadcast featured, for the first time, three living presidents in the same program: Presidents Coolidge, Taft and Hoover: Secrest, 126.

133.Bliss, 23.

134.Associate Press, International News Service and United Press.

135.Danna, 339.

136.Godfrey, 383. He also includes a list of some other memorable broadcasts.

137.Bliss, 19, Danna, 339 and Godfrey, 383. This was the last public appearance of William Jennings Bryan who died a few days later. This story became a major motion picture: Inherit the Wind. It is also a striking precedent for the O.J. Simpson trial coverage.

138.Bliss, 20, Poteet, 106 and Tower in Babel, 192.

139.Godfrey, 383 and Tower in Babel, 148.

140.Danna, 339.

141.Lott, 277 and MacDonald, 11.

142.White, 44, Moore, 44 and Lott, 275.

143.Banning, 237, Moore, 44 and Tebbel, 394.

144.Charnley, 4.

145.White, 44. See also Douglas, 98.

146.Danna, 338.

147.Michael, 178.

148.Bliss, 14, MacDonald 282, and A Tower in Babel, 99. Banning, 132, says it was 69 in 1923. Bliss also indicates that the number increased rapidly from the middle of 1922 when there were less than 12 stations owned by newspapers.

149."Newspaper Broadcasting Stations," **Editor & Publisher**, 26 January 1924: 214.

150.Mott, 680.

151.Barnett, 328.

152.Moore, 44.

153.MacDonald, 282.

154.History of Radio, 275 and Shurick, 127.

155.The news-gathering co-operative expressed concern almost from the outset and certainly from the time that newspapers, such as the Philadelphia Inquirer announced to its readers that "... it served the news first because through a radio enthusiast the news came to the Inquirer's office even before the first flash from the Associated Press...": Hammargren, 91.

156.See Grambling, 315. It is interesting that in this large book there are only 3 references to radio in the index, none of which deal with conflict between the press and radio.

157.Bliss, 39, Michael, 178 and Katzman, 51. Charnely, 5, has written that this was only designed to protect its product which was commercially valuable. This implication of this comment was that AP didn't care much about radio news, it was simply trying to protect its assets. But doesn't that amount to the same thing? It's splitting hairs.

158.Robert Smith, 115.

159.Barnett, 327 and Katzman, 58-59.

160.The period between 1927 and 1933 has been referred to as the "verification period" when radio stations had to "scoop" newspapers to avoid plagiarism charges: Robert Smith, 115.

161.Bliss, 40.

162.Bliss, 40 and Charnley, 7.

163."A.P. Cites N.Y. Sun for Radio Violation," **Editor & Publisher**, 6 December 1922: 4. It is unclear whether the paper was ever fined.

164.Ibid.

165.Michael, 178.

166.Charnley, 7. This is a rather conservative estimate.

167.Bliss, 40, Mott, 679, Charnley, 7 and History by Radio, 360.

168.Bliss, 40, Charnley, 7 and History by Radio, 360. They also advised radio stations to stop running advertisements because it was going to turn listeners off.

169.Chase 135-136 and Lott, 277.

170.Ibid., 276.

171.This is not meant to imply that local stations did not seek advertising revenue; however, with the development of networks advertising in radio became a large-scale phenomenon. See Spalding.

172.From Printers' Ink, quoted in Charnley, 10. Mott, 679, puts the amount of advertising sold to radio at $19 million in 1929.

173.Mott, 674.

174.Charnley, 9.

175.Hammargren, 93 and Lott, 277. This is ironic since AP willingly gave stations and networks news during the election-night broadcast.

176."Radio and Elections," **Editor & Publisher**, 10 November 1928: 30.

177.Charnley, 9-10.

178.Mott, 680 and Danna, 339.

179.MacDonald, 282.

180.Bliss, 13.

181.Also many of the original newscasters came from newspapers: Stephens, 277.

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MANDATE TO NEWS CONSULT:
THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE FCC'S 1960 COMMUNITY ASCERTAINMENT POLICY

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ABSTRACT

Despite strides in understanding the contemporary effects of news consultants, there are few explanations for their emergence and prevalence. Contrary to claims that news consultants perpetrated a "heist" of local TV newsrooms, new evidence reveals that the springboard of consulting was an FCC mandate requiring stations to conduct audience research. Although research-consulting is believed damaging to journalism, consultants fulfilled this FCC mandate by advancing a TV newscast fitting the interests and needs of the majority of viewers.

Mandate to News Consult:

The Untold Story of the FCC'S 1960 Community Ascertainment Policy

News consultants are applied research firms which use information gathered in surveys, focus groups, and auditorium screenings to structure television newscasts. Around 425 of the nation's 700 local TV newsrooms have contracts with one of eight nationally-based consultancies.[1] Since the late 1980s, consulted newsrooms have included practically every local news operation in the 100 largest markets, where eighty-six percent of the nation's TV viewers reside.[2] The growth of news consulting has inspired several recent studies of its contemporary process and effects. Examination of local news "gatekeeping" affirms that audience research influences the content of newscasts.[3] Other studies demonstrate the impact of consultants in personnel decisions and in socializing newsworkers to commercial priorities.[4] Lacking in this literature, however, is a historical perspective on news consulting and, thus, a considered explanation for its prevalence. News advising, particularly with audience research, flies in the face of much that is accepted as normal in journalism, notably a "free" and "independent" reporting process. At the peak of his acclaim in the 1970s, CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite, in a series of highly-critical speeches, considered news consulting a "fad."[5] Cronkite's themes were echoed in several popular works that remain widely cited by scholars, among them Ron Powers' *The Newscasters*, Marvin Barrett's *Moments of Truth?*, Edwin Diamond's *The Tin Kazoo*, and Jerry Jacobs's *Changing Channels*. Unclear is why news consulting rather than disappearing became one of the dominant forces in television news.

The paper that follows is a narrative history that takes up a significant question about news consulting: how it got started in the first place. Existing literature holds that the first news consultant, a firm called McHugh & Hoffman, had a "blueprint" for news that enabled stations to maximize ratings and profits; station managers and sales executives subsequently rushed to

McHugh & Hoffman, and to a second and eventually larger firm called Frank N. Magid Associates, in order to acquire this "magic formula." Powers believed news consultants perpetrated a "heist" of the news process and strongly implied their activities violated FCC rules.[6] Barrett and Diamond reached similar conclusions.[7] In this study, FCC records, correspondence between consultants and clients, written documents obtained from consultants, and interviews with individuals directly involved will paint a different and more-penetrating picture. What became news consulting started as a mandate of the FCC and was shaped by FCC concerns about the proper assessment of the public's "interest, convenience, and necessity." The spark was a 1960 FCC policy called "community ascertainment," which compelled broadcasters to conduct public surveys.[8] The first company to hire a consultant, a radio-television colossus known as Storer Broadcasting, was fearful of ascertainment and turned to McHugh & Hoffman, then a fledgling research firm. Hardly conspiring in a "heist," both McHugh & Hoffman and Magid entered through the regulatory front door.

The paper emphasizes that audience research, not advising, is the substance of news consulting. It will show how information gleaned from audience research enabled consultants to drive news ratings and profits. Although these events occurred many years ago, they have vital contemporary meaning in light of many critical works examining the failings of local TV news.[9] Those who pin these alleged failings on "commercialism" may be oversimplifying a much-more complicated situation. From the beginning, news consultants were conduits connecting local TV stations to the majority of average television viewers. At the FCC, a research procedure was deemed both valid and socially desirable for determining the public's "interests" and "needs." Specifically, research was a solution to what FCC chair Newton Minow had called a "vast wasteland" of unresponsive television programs. It is likely that whatever allegedly ails local TV news is not a function of research-consulting and profit motives so much as a reflection of the audience. Recent opinion polls documenting the overwhelming public acceptance of local TV news indeed indicate fulfillment of the FCC's original objective: a local news satisfying the interests and needs of the majority of TV viewers.[10] To the extent it fails, local TV news may short the interests and needs only of a few, those who may not identify with this majority.

Thus, profit motives and public interests may be in harmony, not in conflict as many insist. As Frank Magid would relate, "The FCC gave us an important entry point. . . . Community ascertainment gave us our first indication that the public wanted something different in news from what professional journalists were trained to provide."[11] According to Peter Hoffman, who co-founded the first consulting firm with the late Phil McHugh, "There were two ways you could determine the public's interests and needs. One was to have some people in a TV station decide this among themselves, the other was to go out and actually ask the public."[12] Broadcasters were under no illusion that the FCC rejected the former and demanded the latter. Community ascertainment eventually would lapse in the 1980s. Yet it was around long enough to alert many broadcasters to the twin regulatory and commercial benefits of news-related research.

i. New Plan to Improve TV: Let the Public Speak

The circuitous series of events that led to the formation of McHugh & Hoffman commenced in 1960, a year that had begun with the FCC sharpening its regulatory knife but, as always, unsure how to direct this dagger. Although under the 1934 Communications Act the commission lacked power to censor television programming, sentiment was running high that something had to be done. A fitting example of what seemed the failure of the TV industry was the loophole local broadcasters had found to skirt the FCC's news-and-public affairs requirement. Even though the FCC had ruled that ten percent of airtime must be devoted to these topics, most TV stations met the quota by confining peak-hour nightly newscasts to as few as five minutes and compensating with strips of low-effort public affairs offerings in viewing "ghettos" in the early morning, late at night, and on weekends. While low on the FCC agenda, anxieties about local news were helping the commission hone its overriding concern, the compulsion of local TV stations to clear hour upon hour of seemingly insipid network entertainment programming, to profit as a result. In certain respects, it was arguable whether "local" television could be said to exist. That year, a study by Gary Steiner, eventually published in his book *The People Look at Television*, had found that only three percent of viewers regarded their local TV stations as "local TV stations." Ninety-seven percent identified only the big networks, many apparently thinking the networks owned all of the local channels.[13] Steiner's information added fuel to allegations that local TV stations were content as lapdogs of the networks, that their mandate to serve the public was lost in their fixation for quick profits.

From its earliest days, the FCC had sought to assert local standards as check against the dominance of this network system.[14] Its chain broadcasting report in 1941, showing how NBC had practically controlled hundreds of key local radio affiliates, had cleared the way for the 1943 breakup of the NBC Red and Blue radio networks, the latter to become ABC. The commission's 1946 "Blue Book" had been the hoped-for final word. It had affirmed that "local self-expression still remains an essential function of a station's operation . . . . [S]uch programs should not be crowded out of the best listening hours."[15] The "Blue Book," though, was honored mostly in the breech, with the FCC so consumed with matters relating to television, including its "freeze" on station licensing between 1948 and 1952, that enforcement was impossible. Yet distresses over programming and chain broadcasting that had percolated in radio not only transferred to the new medium. They grew more intense. The FCC circulated to licensees its first rules about payola when the quiz show scandals in 1959 offered a glaring example of how network programs merely switched on by hundreds of affiliates had created a pathetic public spectacle.[16] Then for the second time, the FCC brought anti-trust action against NBC, this time because NBC had commandeered ownership of a local TV station in Philadelphia.[17] Prominent in every allegation had been annual FCC filings showing that recently-licensed TV stations had turned profits long before their owners said they would. Coming out of the "freeze" in 1952, TV stations had been given regulatory latitude because of the plea that most would lose money for seven to ten years. Yet seventy-one percent were profitable by 1958.[18]

In 1960, Frederick Ford had served on the commission for only two years and had been its chair for only a few months. Yet in this short span of time, Ford had renewed one of the FCC's core debates, that revolving around the definition of the term "public interest, convenience, and necessity," the rationale behind the commission's licensing procedures. To renew a license, all a broadcaster had to do was fill out a four-page questionnaire. If a broadcaster could document merely that the transmitter had been turned on, a case could be made that the public interest had been served. Yet characterizing television as a compendium of game shows, soap operas, and slapstick comedies, Ford fumed because his FCC had no way to disagree. Summoned to Capitol Hill, Ford complained at a Senate hearing that under the Communications Act the commission had no authority to set program standards. "I don't see how we could possibly go out and say this program is good and that program is bad," Ford testified. "That would be a direct violation of the law."[19] Still, it was hard to imagine that viewers in the inner cities of the East were best served by the same programs as viewers on the farms of the Midwest. If this could be proven during license renewals, Ford knew, the network-affiliate noose would be loosened. Accordingly, the main order of business at the FCC through the first seven months of 1960 was an updated statement on programming policy, its cornerstone a new and legally-sound idea for better ensuring the public's interests and needs. Essentially, the FCC decided that if it itself could not determine interests and needs, then neither could the broadcasters. The public would have the final say. On July 29, 1960, after a 6-1 vote, the FCC approved new a policy, which read: "In the fulfillment of his obligation the broadcaster should consider the tastes, needs and desires of the public he is licensed to serve in developing his programming and should exercise conscientious efforts not only to ascertain them but also to carry them out as well as he reasonably can." News was among fourteen programs expressly placed under the jurisdiction of this new FCC concept.[20]

Few ears immediately perked, though, the policy have been rendered in the middle of a presidential election campaign. Ford was an appointee of outgoing President Dwight Eisenhower, and he had signed the new policy statement as a lame duck FCC chair. Political protocol required that Ford defer rulemaking until after the national election just three months away. John Kennedy won the election that November but did not appoint Ford's successor until just days before the inaugural in January 1961. Thus for almost six months, the FCC's policy statement was in limbo. When Kennedy took office, 500 radio and television license renewals were backlogged at FCC headquarters.[21] Kennedy's choice at the FCC was a Chicago lawyer and Democratic party political insider named Newton Minow, a figure barely thirty-five years old whose interest in broadcast regulation stemmed from difficulties he had had in arranging "equal time" for presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson in 1956.[22] Minow knew in passing only one member of the commission.[23] He was particularly unfamiliar to the nation's local broadcasters, who were anxious to learn where he stood on issues pending before the commission. They invited the new FCC chair to speak at their major industry conclave, the annual convention of the National Association of Broadcasters that spring in Washington. Minow accepted the broadcasters' invitation, and when the convention convened on May 9 he satisfied their curiosities with a vengeance. Minow's speech before the NAB was the one made famous by his assertion that the nation's airwaves amounted to a "vast wasteland." This phrase, however, was not the only passage that had resounded in the hall that day. The thrust of Minow's speech had been the announcement of the first full-scale FCC licensing crackdown. Minow expanded on the same matters Ford, his predecessor, had taken up in the 1960 hearings, that "[t]oo many local stations operate with one hand on the network switch and the other on a projector loaded with old movies." Minow said this would change. "I say to you now," he proclaimed. "Renewal will not be pro forma in the future. There is nothing permanent or sacred about a broadcast license." Minow concluded by informing broadcasters that new instructions on license renewals would be forthcoming.[24]

Those who had heard the "wasteland" speech, hundreds of local broadcast owners and managers, already knew what these instructions likely were to be. Minow was expected to follow through with enabling action that would give the FCC the power to enforce Ford's July 1960 policy statement. Minow did precisely this. Although not in so many words, Minow in the "wasteland" speech had sent a clear message that he favored the idea of deferring public interests and needs to the public itself, rather than having broadcasters do as they pleased. The trade publication *Variety* characterized Minow's position as "iron-fisted."[25] To unfold in a series of steps, the enabling action ushered a new procedure Minow's staff began calling "community ascertainment." Under the plan, broadcasters were to venture into their communities and consult civic leaders as well as a cross-section of the general public. The objective of this factfinding was a "prudent, positive and continuing effort to discover and fulfill the tastes, needs and desires of a [licensee's] community for public service."[26] After the factfinding, broadcasters were to respond to what they had learned and, then, at the three-year intervals when their licenses were due for renewal, make available to the FCC all of the results. A public inspection file needed to contain a narrative statement that explained how the various steps had been accomplished. Station managers "must prove they have diligently studied their markets to find out what people ought to get from radio and TV."[27] Broadcasters were caught quite off-guard by Minow's endorsement of ascertainment. Accustomed to renewing licenses with those four-page forms, owners and managers dreaded reams of time-consuming paperwork. Thus within three weeks of Minow's speech, fifteen broadcasters had written personal letters to the FCC in protest.[28] It was mid 1961, and the policy statement had stood in abeyance now for almost a year, officially as an "interim report" with no rulemaking. There had seemed a strong possibility community ascertainment would die in bureaucratic red tape or be reconsidered. FCC commissioner Rosel Hyde had written a dissent against the policy statement. But with the FCC adamant, this hope evaporated. Several radio and TV owners filed lawsuits in local courts alleging the FCC's plan to enforce ascertainment with license revocations violated original agreements between the commission and the license holders. Finally in 1962, federal judge David Bazelon in ruling against the owner of Suburban Broadcasting upheld the FCC's authority to join ascertainment to license revocations.[29] Community ascertainment was a fact of life for everyone who owned and managed a local television station.

License revocation was nothing short of the TV death penalty. Without a license, a broadcaster had to go out of business. Thus not surprisingly, this new community ascertainment procedure, which demanded volumes of factfinding and analysis, dramatically heightened broadcasters' anxieties. It was as if car owners had just been told they needed a college dissertation to renew a drivers license. The ascertainment documents were not to be submitted to the FCC, but instead to be kept at the station in files that could be inspected by any member of the public. This made ascertainment especially frightening because groups or factions seeking to challenge a license, for whatever reason, would have access to materials that might bolster their cause. That this volume of documents would not be sent to the FCC scarcely brought comfort. To the contrary, the FCC, much like the IRS, planned to conduct audits. At its discretion, it would select certain stations for on-site inspections, without announcing these stations in advance. Ultimately, the broadcasters' disdain over community ascertainment boiled down to the methods the FCC was mandating, which seemed as nebulous as they were exhaustive. Nervous station owners who had started working on community ascertainments in 1961, on the basis only of the interim report, had been much confused. As he had promised, Minow immediately followed up on the interim report with the first operational guidelines in mid 1961. All of the provisions Minow added related to methodology. Policies requiring broadcasters to interview civic leaders were clarified. However, understanding continued to break down over the sketchy procedures requiring broadcasters to solicit input from the general public. When the official FCC Rules and Regulations were revised in 1961, broadcasters read, "Each license or permittee of a commercially operated TV station shall place in the station's public inspection file documentation relating to its efforts to consult with a roughly random sample of members of the general public . . . ." According to the new rules, this documentation had to be a "survey," and it had to stratify the population by "age, ethnic, and geographic" criteria. Finally, the "number of people surveyed" was to be a factor in the commission's determination of compliance.[30]

The FCC had not used the term "audience research." Yet without a doubt, audience research was what the FCC wanted. Just glancing at the new rules, station owners easily could see that terms such as "survey," "random sample," and "stratification" related to some sort of research procedure. It was from there that questions had multiplied. Most local stations already paid heavily for formal research in ratings reports sold to them by Nielsen and ARB, national ratings services. Could ratings surveys, which were not conducted by the license holder and which lacked detail, be used in community ascertainment? Furthermore, most stations routinely gathered inexpensive audience information by informal means, such as by compiling viewers' comments. Could these informal measures fulfill the commission's demands? By 1961, many broadcasters knew at least something about professional research; they were aware, for example, that it could cost tens of thousands of dollars. Despite periodic claims by professional researchers that their data could improve performance and profitability, most television owners and managers had ignored this. Chained to their networks, local broadcasters considered research an extravagance. Still, if professional research could serve two purposes--ratings and renewals--it might be cost effective. What the FCC expected in a community ascertainment survey likely would be discovered by television stations in the Southeast and industrial Midwest, which were up for the next round of license renewals. With Minow's speech at the NAB convention ringing in their ears, the owners of the largest television properties in these regions--those with the most to lose should their licenses be revoked--were in a mood to take no chances.

ii. Storer Broadcasting: A Company Needing Research

Notable among these properties were the five stations owned by the Storer Broadcasting

Company. They included WJBK in Detroit, the sixth-largest television market; WJW in Cleveland, the eighth-largest market; WITI in Milwaukee, the twenty-first market; WAGA in Atlanta, the twenty-third market; and WSPD in Toledo, the fiftieth market. These Storer-owned television stations had licenses due to expire by 1963. As of in 1961 they were classic examples of network affiliates that confined news productions to fifteen minutes, kept news investments to a minimum, and skimmed a news audience from adjoining entertainment programs. Detroit's WJBK had a three-person news department. Cleveland's WJW loosely had four news people, one a college professor who showed up at the station only long enough to deliver the news. Milwaukee's WITI and Atlanta's WAGA, no better, were the largest stations in the country without network newscasts. They refused to carry them. The "CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite" would not be seen in Atlanta until 1966. "At WAGA," general manager Ken Bagwell explained, "we carried reruns of 'Amos and Andy' until the sprocket holes wore out."[31]

The moment Minow announced his license crackdown in 1961, the Storer group accepted audits as a fait accompli. It began plotting an ascertainment strategy in late 1961, two years before what seemed a certain day of reckoning with Minow. A shortage of local programming including news while enough trouble for most local stations actually was a relatively minor worry at Storer. The company was operating under a regulatory cloud. Although Storer was not sanctioned, it management had just been implicated in the biggest influence peddling scandal in the FCC's thirty-five year history. For several days in March 1960, the nation's capital had buzzed over rumors that Storer had given free rides on a company airplane and a vacation on a company yacht to then FCC chair John Doerfer. Acting quickly to head off a certain Congressional investigation, Eisenhower fired Doerfer.[32] Ironically for Storer, it had been Doerfer's dismissal that had allowed Frederick Ford to take the reigns at the commission, and then advance community ascertainment.[33] Storer was tainted not only by the Doerfer affair. Potentially of greater interest to FCC auditors were the maneuvers that had enabled Storer to purchase the profit-laden Milwaukee station back in

1958. It had done this from proceeds gained from its sale of KPTV in Portland, Oregon, the nation's first UHF station and a spearhead of the FCC's vision for expanding UHF broadcasting around the country. Storer had supported KPTV for only four years. Immediately after Storer sold it, KPTV merged with a VHF station in Portland. The first UHF channel went dark. As a result Storer was immersed in allegations it was trafficking in local stations.[34] If this was not enough, there had been rumblings at the FCC about absentee ownership. Storer was a company based in Miami, where it owned a radio station. All of its TV properties were hundreds of miles away.

It clearly did not help that Storer was one of broadcasting's big fish. In 1961, Storer was the nation's sixth-largest broadcast company and exceeded in size only by the three networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC; Westinghouse; and a company then called Metropolitan Broadcasting, later known as Metromedia. Founded in Toledo in 1927 by George B. Storer, Sr., the company had started as a somewhat small yet active and profitable radio group owner. In the 1930s, it had attempted a radio network to compete with CBS and NBC. While this venture failed, Storer moved fast when television arrived in the 1940s and obtained three of the coveted 108 TV licenses granted by the FCC before its "freeze" in 1948. These stations were WJBK, WAGA, and WSPD; WJW, purchased in the 1950s, also had been a pre-"freeze" station. The Detroit, Cleveland, and Atlanta stations were affiliates of the dominant CBS network. The Milwaukee and Toledo stations started with the then-weak ABC network, but later were able to jockey for stronger affiliations, WITI with CBS, WSPD with NBC.[35] Mainly because it owned CBS affiliates in two of the ten largest markets, the Storer company was flush with income as the 1960s began. Its annual revenues in 1961 of $37 million were the largest of any non-network broadcast group. Not only this, on the eve of its license renewals Storer posted first-quarter 1962 revenues double those of a year before, remarkable because CBS entertainment programs had just taken a dip in the ratings.[36] In 1961, George Storer, Sr., the board chair, relinquished his second position as company chair to his thirty-five-year-old son, George B. Storer, Jr.[37] Money continued to accumulate, and thanks to the FCC the two Storers would have a hard time spending it. Under FCC rules, companies could own only five VHF television stations, a limit Storer already had reached. Through the mid 1960s, Storer again and again would test these ownership rules so it could acquire more TV stations.[38] Storer's vision finally would be realized in the 1990s, when the FCC did relax the rules. In 1994, these Storer stations would form the core of Rupert Murdoch's company New World Broadcasting, television's first super-group. In the 1960s, Storer did claim additional UHF licenses in Boston and San Diego, but because the FCC stood firm and said this was the absolute limit, Storer's wealth started to go elsewhere. One of the major developments on Wall Street in 1965 would occur when Storer purchased Northeast Airlines from billionaire Howard Hughes.[39] Storer then assumed a controlling interest of the Boston Gardens sports arena. Not long after this, Storer would acquire its first local cable television franchises, eventually to become the nation's third-largest multi-system cable operator.[40] This buying spree was made possible by the profits generated from its original broadcast properties. Thus much had been riding on Storer's first post-Minow license renewals. Anticipating an inspection, Storer wanted to dress smartly.

As at all group-owned television stations, major decisions at Storer were not left to local station managers. Instead, they were determined at the corporate level, by executives who had aegis over all operations. By late 1961, the topic of community ascertainment had reached Storer's highest corporate echelon, in discussions between company chair George Storer, Jr., general counsel Warren Zwicky, and a figure named Willard "Bill" Michaels, the vice president of the television division. These men communicated at a distance. Storer worked at corporate headquarters in Miami, Zwicky usually in Washington. Michaels ran the television division from an office in the Detroit suburb of Birmingham where he was proximate to WJBK, the group's largest property. Storer's plan was simple: it would not fight the FCC but give the commission cooperation to the nth degree.[41] "If Minow says 'jump,'" Zwicky was heard to say, "We are going to answer, 'How high?'"[42] Perplexed about ascertainment, Storer asked Michaels to find out how much detail would be needed in the public survey phase of the procedure. In his reply, Michaels estimated that "[i]n each of the five markets we want questions devised in such as fashion that the stations ascertain a minimum of five general subjects, which the interviewees indicate by their answers are of greatest public importance." This, in the opinion of Michaels, would exceed the requirements of the FCC, which had indicated that only two subjects, "needs and interests," be assessed.[43] Zwicky, the lawyer, agreed, insisting the process had to be "serious, complete, and credible."[44] These executives were undaunted by the first phase of ascertainment, the interviews with civic leaders. Storer and Michaels decided that the general managers in Detroit, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Atlanta, and Toledo would conduct interviews with the most prominent and highest-ranking civic officials, and that assistant managers would contact other prominent figures in the communities. Michaels knew the managers and their lieutenants would not cotton to this assignment, but he planned to accept no arguments or excuses. The FCC had stated only that "50 per cent of all interviews must be conducted by management level employees."[45] Having all of the interviews performed by the managers, including the general managers, would signal to the FCC "superior compliance."[46] Whether this could be signaled in the second phase, the public survey, was a question not so expeditiously resolved.

Indeed, not long after the initial exchanges between Storer, Michaels, and Zwicky, the public survey had swollen into an albatross. Earl Kahn, the researcher assigned to McHugh & Hoffman who ultimately supervised the surveys, recalled "numerous questions" he directed to Zwicky and others, who seemed only able to give educated guesses. Because of quandaries such as this, the FCC soon would provide more precise direction. Yet as of 1962, the FCC had not specified whether the survey interviews had to be face-to-face or if telephone interviews could be used. Worse yet, the FCC had only broadly hinted as to the total number of people who needed to be interviewed. As a rule of thumb, many assumed 100 contacts was about right. However, language mandating demographic stratifications, which meant the total group had to be divided and divided again, strongly suggested samples of 200, 300, or larger. There were loose guidelines over whether survey items could solicit yes-no or multiple choice responses, or instead needed open-ended commentary. The FCC's language, having referred to "conscientiously consulting the public," slanted toward the latter and added to the anguish. Open-ended factfinding was time-consuming and laborious. Perhaps most troubling was one provision the FCC had specified, that the survey must be original and defrayed by the applicant, which meant a TV station could not send someone to the library to look up second-hand digests of public opinion polls or other published research. According to Kahn, "The Storer people had an image of their employees dropping what they were doing and taking to the streets to work on ascertainment."[47] As disruptive and crude as an employee-conducted survey promised to be, many station owners did opt for this to get past their first ascertainments.

The five Storer stations were not to be among them. By late 1961, the Storer executives had decided to relieve their television stations of the survey burden by hiring a professional research organization. All along it had seemed that a professional survey was what the FCC really sought, so long as the licensee initiated the datagathering and used its own resources to pay for it. Indeed, in a several subsequent statements the FCC would uphold professional surveys. Nevertheless, Storer's decision to turn to professionals had not been an easy one because of what seemed inordinate costs. These big fish of American enterprise became wealthy by riding herd on expenses. Companies in a position to buy airlines and sports arenas were usually those troubled by the cost of paper clips, and Storer was no exception. The fee for just one professional survey, with enough interviews to satisfy the FCC's requirement for demographic stratifications, was around $5,000. For the same amount, a TV station could replace a new studio camera, pay a month of utility bills, or defray other basic costs of doing businesses. The Storer executives had to multiply the $5,000 figure by five to account for all of the TV stations in the group. At Storer headquarters in January 1962, there had been a gnashing of teeth over the cost factors. But in the end, indelible impressions of Minow's "wasteland" speech announcing the licensing crackdown carried the day. Given the tens millions of dollars at risk in a license revocation, a $25,000 expense looked like a pittance. While a professional survey satisfied only one part of the procedure, the certainty it would wow any FCC auditor comforted Storer executives. They could end all of this confusion and get on with their jobs of running their TV stations. In early 1962 Storer and Michaels had but one decision left to make: selecting the research firm. All candidates known to Michaels were market research operations that had varying degrees of contact with broadcasting. They included two local firms, Market Opinion Research and Milton Brand and Company. Additional possibilities were the A. J. Wood company of Philadelphia, Opinion Research of Princeton, N. J., the Merwyn Field group of Los Angeles, and Burke Marketing Research of Cincinnati.[48] Michaels also knew of a research firm in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, named as Frank N. Magid Associates. But Michaels saw a drawback in hiring any of these companies. While they all had impressive credentials in field research, each strictly was a research supplier with a forte in gathering data. Because ascertainment reports had to have narrative statements, Michaels was hoping for a company that could help with the analysis and the writing. If Storer was going to spend $25,000, Michaels reasoned, then let the contractor do as much of the work as possible.[49] In early 1962, with resources to go anywhere in the country, Michaels' search ended almost around the block from his suburban Detroit office.

That March, Michaels was a paid a visit by two individuals who had just resigned from key positions at the Detroit-based Campbell-Ewald advertising agency. Philip L. McHugh had been the vice president of the agency's television division, Peter S. Hoffman that division's second-in-command. Their mysterious departure from Campbell-Ewald had just made headlines in trade publications from coast to coast. Campbell-Ewald was no ordinary ad agency but rather on the strength of a single local client one of the five largest in the United States in TV billings. The client was General Motors, the world's largest corporation and second-largest advertiser. General Motors was spending millions not merely to advertise on national television. Well into the 1960s, sponsors like GM controlled entire television programs and hired agencies such as Campbell-Ewald to produce and direct them. The two men greeting Michaels had been among the most influential in television. Along with a half-dozen other major credits, the hottest show then on the networks, NBC's "Bonanza," had been the brain-child of these two executives. In the meeting, a curious Michaels finally found out what had happened, that Campbell-Ewald's owners had looked askance at McHugh's fixation with expensive audience research and then had reacted passively, McHugh violently, when on the basis of this research McHugh had said that entertainer Dinah Shore needed to be taken off the air.[50] While this was the kind of inside intrigue most broadcasters lived for, McHugh and Hoffman were not in Michaels' office to recite war stories.

They wanted his business. In a small office in Birmingham not far from Storer's television headquarters, the former Campbell-Ewald executives had established what they were calling a "consulting" firm. As the first broadcast consultant, the firm "McHugh & Hoffman" would operate just like consultancies in big business: it planned to coordinate public research studies, analyze findings, make assessments, and prepare narrated written recommendations.[51] A particular advantage of McHugh & Hoffman was its exclusive contract with the nation's largest applied research firm, a Chicago company called Social Research, Inc. Part of McHugh's dispute with Campbell-Ewald had been the agency's refusal to spend more money on SRI research projects. Headed by two well-known academic researchers, W. Lloyd Warner and Burleigh B. Gardner, SRI was a fixture at the highest levels of American enterprise. It had just been the subject of a best-selling book by Vance Packard called *The Hidden Persuaders*. McHugh and Hoffman had walked out at Campbell-Ewald somehow assured that backed by SRI they would land a contract with CBS, where McHugh had worked directly under CBS president Frank Stanton in the 1930s and 1940s, or with the media department at the Chrysler Corporation, where Hoffman had contacts. To the partners' dismay, these opportunities were not materializing. Initially, they thought of Storer as a step down, only later to realize the large scale of Storer's operations. While McHugh pitched Michaels on the idea that research could help the Storer stations in the ratings, and

Michaels fully intended to get around to this in due course, the Storer vice president was intrigued at that moment for one reason: as so-called consultants versed not just in research but also in programming and analysis, McHugh & Hoffman seemed the perfect choice as someone to sick on community ascertainment.[52] McHugh was up to the task, to later confirm with Michaels that "[t]he yearly market studies are of particular value to Storer management as effectively meeting the Federal Communication Commissions' requirements." McHugh reiterated, "These studies are the most complete way to properly sample viewer opinion."[53]

With time of the essence, Michaels went ahead and signed a preliminary contract with McHugh & Hoffman, corporate chair George Storer, Jr. contacted by telephone in Miami, finally giving his okay. Because of other commitments, it was not until weeks later, on May 1, 1962, that Storer was able to travel north to Detroit to put his signature on the agreement, the first contract ever between a local broadcaster and an outside research-consultant. In a small ceremony in Michaels' office, with McHugh, Hoffman, Storer, and WJBK manager Larry Carino on hand, the contract became official. Its main provision were professional research surveys in Detroit, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Atlanta, and Toledo at a total cost of $42,500.[54] This was almost double the $25,000, $5,000 per survey, that Storer had anticipated, and he had momentarily balked. But McHugh explained that the extra amount would defray consulting services he and Hoffman would provide the five stations until May 1963, when this one-year agreement was set to expire. There had been no inkling that these extra consulting services would steer McHugh & Hoffman into news. Nevertheless, as a means of complying with FCC requirements, Storer had opened the door to news consulting.[55]

iii. The Birth of News Consulting

By the late spring of 1962, trained field researchers from SRI had filtered into the five cities. Storer had wanted these ascertainment surveys completed by the end of 1962, even though the FCC's staggered deadlines allowed longer periods of time. On schedule, the results of these surveys, which contained information from random samples of around 400 people in each locale, were placed the stations' public inspection files. Oddly, no one from the FCC examined any of the finished documents. The respective station managers, one by one, received postcards from the commission with notifications that their licenses had been renewed. Having dodged a bullet, Storer heaved a sigh of relief. As for the rush to enlist McHugh & Hoffman in the renewals, WAGA's Ken Bagwell, later a prominent Storer executive, would state, "It was better to be safe than sorry." In point of fact, Bagwell and the other Storer managers could not wait to embrace McHugh & Hoffman, its research something they never would have had without the corporate level's decision to commission it. As soon as McHugh & Hoffman had started working at the station level, the dynamics of the relationship shifted from legal to proprietary priorities. "We knew all along," Bagwell would add, "that professional research was there to help your competitive position . . . [but] in those days you saw it only in big business." It was too expensive for others. Bagwell said he could "not remember very many discussions about [the survey portion of] ascertainment after the contract with McHugh & Hoffman [had been signed]," and that "Michaels wanted it [the survey] off our backs." Characterizing ascertainment as the "pole" that "vaulted" Storer into the domain of professional research, Bagwell noted that research surveys "gave you all sorts of opportunities to ask the public questions about why [it] liked or disliked your programs . . . . Any manager worth his salt was going to use research to build the ratings."[56] The FCC apparently had not entertained this eventuality. Ironically, implemented as a way to contain profits, community ascertainment wound up an avenue to profits.

As it turned out, Storer was not the only broadcast company to have its first ascertainments end with a rubber stamp. Rumors spread that no one from the FCC had looked at anyone's ascertainment filings. While this was not true, the commission did report that only one percent of renewal applications were audited.[57] Most broadcasters' first-blush fears about ascertainment eased when it became obvious the public's interests and needs, as defined by the public itself under the FCC's mandate, were satisfied by programs already on the air.[58] What Minow deemed the "vast wasteland" continued, and no licenses were revoked. By no means, though, did broadcasters regard the licensing crackdown as bluff and bluster. Minow in a brief two-year tenure as FCC chair had pled for appropriations that would allow more inspections. While Minow did not succeed before leaving in 1963, the possibility was ever-present that someone might. Frederick Ford, the originator of ascertainment, remained on the commission until the end of 1964. Because ascertainment was upheld by Minow's successor, William Henry, and the next several FCC chairs after that, broadcasters were saddled with a procedure they felt served no practical purpose. They would have been more sanguine had they had a clearer understanding of what the FCC really wanted. Anxieties recurred at three-year intervals, as did more confusion. Year by year through the 1960s and 1970s, the commission circulated materials to clear up questions about ascertainment.[59] A decade after the policy was enacted, the FCC would publish a sixteen-page ascertainment "primer," significant because it endorsed the consultants' research in ascertainment surveys.[60] Inexplicably, just five years before the demise of ascertainment the commission would publish yet another "primer."[61] Finally in the 1980s, broadcasters made headway in their complaints when a conservative trend swept the FCC under chair Mark Fowler. One of Fowler's first steps in deregulating local broadcasting was dumping community ascertainment.[62]

Yet after Ford and Minow, the research genie was out of the bottle. By the time Minow's tenure had ended in 1963, stations that included New York's WCBS, Chicago's WBBM, Los Angeles's KNXT, Philadelphia's WCAU, Dallas's WFAA, Miami's WTVJ, and the Twin Cities' WCCO, and St. Louis' KMOX had enlisted McHugh & Hoffman principally or largely for community ascertainment surveys. McHugh & Hoffman's main competitor, Frank N. Magid Associates, helped coordinate ascertainment at its first client, WMT in Cedar Rapids. While without the ancillary services McHugh & Hoffman provided, community ascertainment was a provision in contracts Magid would sign with its next six clients, Salt Lake City's KSL, Seattle's

KIRO, San Diego's KOGO, Denver's KLZ, Indianapolis' WFMB, and New Orleans' WWL.[63] With each new year bringing up another wave of stations for license renewals, $5,000 or $10,000 research-consulting fees no longer seemed an extravagance. Yet by no stretch of the imagination were station owners and managers going to spend this kind of money only to have the results collect dust in a public inspection file. Lurking in the competed reports were clues about the audience and, thus, how ratings could be increased.

Although McHugh & Hoffman officially was a "broadcast" consultant as of March 1962, it did not begin referring to itself as a "news" consultant until the end of that year. Magid remained strictly a research supplier until 1968, when it assumed a more active role at WWL. Formal news consulting would not begin at Magid until 1969. The birthplace of news consulting had been the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, where Phil McHugh and Peter Hoffman were the headline attractions at a managerial retreat convened by Michaels on September 8, 1962. Topping the agenda were the consultants' proprietary analyses of the just-completed Storer ascertainment studies. McHugh stood in front of an easel and told Michaels and the managers, much as Steiner had told the FCC, that viewers did not readily identify any of the Storer stations, only their networks. McHugh's good news was evidence network entertainment programs did satisfy viewers' interests and needs, the FCC's judgments notwithstanding. Yet McHugh's downside was his conclusion that unless Storer reduced its dependance on the networks the company never could control its own destiny. McHugh went on to explain that average people formed loyalties to local TV stations much the way they grew loyal to baseball and football teams, and that this loyalty was rooted in local newscasts, the one program consistently seen night after night, week after week. "[A]utomatically staying with one [network] is a clearly diminishing practice even in quite low status groups," the studies had affirmed.[64] Moreover, according to McHugh, viewers had a tendency to stick with a certain local station if it could be trusted for local news.[65] As McHugh would elaborate in latter documents circulated to Storer and other clients, "Viewers express a want and perceive a need for a television station to have a close connection between them and the community [and] express a wanting perception for a 'dialogue' with the stations."[66] Local news was "the primary factor determining overall station position relative to its competition. The station that is #1 in early news [will see] a higher rating in prime time than the #3 station, irrespective of the network. . . . [A] station's local newscast ratings are the 'leverage' factor placing the station either #1 or #3."[67]

The Storer managers quite simply could not believe what they were hearing. Prior to this, local news had been kissed off and discussed only in terms of meeting the FCC's ten percent-of-airtime licensing quota. Indeed, the original plan at Colorado Springs was to have McHugh talk about perceptions of childrens shows, locally-produced variety programs, cooking shows, off-network syndicated reruns, and afternoon and weekend movies, the bulk of Storer's non-network fare.[68] McHugh's recommendation that local news serve as Storer's "top priority" rightfully caused a stir. "It is an expensive area to develop, because it takes qualified newsmen, cameramen, and directors behind the scenes," he stated. Nevertheless, "it is an area where future investment must be made over the years if the goal of the Storer television stations is to be number one." When one of the managers inquired as to the level of this investment, McHugh estimated that between forty and seventy-five thousand dollars would be needed each year at each of the five stations. Because none of the Storer stations were spending anywhere near those amounts on news, another manager wondered whether McHugh was realistic in predicting dramatic returns on these outlays. "We can only report what we have learned from these studies," he replied. "News is the major ingredient toward the Storer stations becoming number one in their markets." The next key question was directed at Michaels. Would not he, the division vice president, look askance at a station manager who might have to report a loss because of these sizable news investments? When Michaels told the managers not to worry, and later decreed, "[You must] follow the McHugh & Hoffman recommendations," the consultants--now "news" consultants--had a green light to proceed.[69]

It mainly was because of McHugh's revelations about local TV news, an area Storer barely even had considered, that McHugh & Hoffman's one-year contract was renewed. Its relationship with Storer would continue for eighteen more years. Serious news consulting effectively began in 1963 and 1964, when McHugh & Hoffman's research was freed of ascertainment concerns and could concentrate on why people watched--or did not watch--television news. A governing finding was that average people appreciated but did not warm to existing television newscasts because they were perceived as too boring or too complicated, and featured newscasters merely reading news stories out loud. There was little visualization. "[T]he average viewer is able to talk at length about television without mentioning [news] programs," one study had shown.[70] For example, McHugh & Hoffman's studies in 1963 tabbed second-year CBS anchor Walter Cronkite as a stick-in-the-mud, his only hope "his willingness to display some emotion and allow the public to see and think of him as a person." When Cronkite did exactly this later that year, while covering the Kennedy assassination, his research "Q-scores" soared. NBC's Chet Huntley and David Brinkley then were better liked than Cronkite but nevertheless perceived as "too patronizing and condescending, [with] lower status people . . . prone to feel that occasionally Huntley or Brinkley flaunts his superior knowledge in the viewer's face."[71] Results from Toledo tended to typify what average viewers preferred as an alternative. In the ascertainment surveys, viewers expressed a need for "a more friendly, neighborly" newscast "which shows more interest in the people."[72] A watershed in the development of local TV news consulting was the 1964 annual study in Cleveland for Storer's WJW, in which findings resounded with positive impressions of a highly-visualized and personality-oriented newscast on competing station KYW. Visibly departing from the network style, KYW, under news director Al Primo, had christened this new concept "Eyewitness News." "Viewers remark with considerable frequency that the 'Eyewitness News' on Channel 3 [KYW] has been interesting." As one respondent put it, "They seem to do anything to get a good picture." "Seeing for yourself," another commented, "makes it easier to understand."[73] KYW's surge in the ratings both in Cleveland and in Philadelphia, where the station moved in 1965, resulted in McHugh & Hoffman's orders to emulate "Eyewitness News" at the five Storer stations and at its other clients. In 1968, when McHugh & Hoffman was hired by the ABC-owned stations, and joined Primo at WABC in New York, it became instrumental in using its research to further perfect "Eyewitness News." From here, the thread of news consulting and "Eyewitness News" is picked up and extensively treated elsewhere in the literature.[74] Yet there had been a long prelude. "The idea we had a magic formula and pandered to the audience was ludicrous," Hoffman maintained. "Phil [McHugh] and I knew next to nothing about news. All we had to go on was the research, where the people kept telling us 'The newscast needs to be improved.'"[75]

iv. Conclusion

Thirty-five years after Minow's enactment of community ascertainment, neither the TV news research process nor those in control of it have changed. McHugh & Hoffman, the first consultant, and Magid, the second consultant, continue to thrive, with nearly 200 newsroom clients between them. Moveover, today's five other nationally-based research-consulting firms--Audience Research & Development, Reymer and Associates, Primo Newservices, Broadcast Image, and Clemensen, Sheehan & Rovitto--were founded in the 1970s and 1980s by figures who had trained at or had close working relations with Magid or McHugh & Hoffman. Following interviews with a cross-section of news directors for a 1990 article in the *RTNDA Communicator*, Karen Frankola noted that it is "almost impossible to talk to a news director who says he can do his job without research."[76] Concurring, author Craig Allen in a 1995 study of anchor hiring found the nation's station managers and news directors in strong agreement that research as performed by news consultants is both essential and standard operating procedure.[77] Thus for many reasons more scholarly investigation into news consulting is indicated.

A question open for further historical studies of local news is the point in time at which community ascertainment stopped being the main rationale for the hiring of consultants. Determining exactly when audience research was accepted purely for ratings enhancement would offer important clues about the emergence of local TV news as a profit center. In the case of the first five TV stations to hire a consultant, the Storer outlets, this occasion came early, within two years of the first assignment in 1962. Still, other evidence suggests that several years passed before owners and managers viewed research as more than a toll paid the FCC. A delayed reaction, perhaps until the early 1970s, would affirm the historical testimony of both Frank Magid and Peter Hoffman, who maintain their first clients were principally motivated by the FCC's requirement. Important supporting evidence may be the FCC's ascertainment "primer" in 1971, which acknowledged an influx of inquiries from licensees seeking to use Magid, McHugh & Hoffman, and other professional research firms in ascertainment studies.[78] In any case, it remains clear that while ascertainment did not account for the rapid expansion of news consulting in the 1980s, this FCC mandate did put news consulting in motion and established a research regimen still in use today.

Clarifying that major consulting firms were first and foremost research entities simultaneously clarifies that these firms are best conceived not as manipulators but rather as feedback channels, in effect conduits, that direct audience inputs into newsrooms. The crux of the "gatekeeping" process and other aspects local TV news may not be newsroom by-play so much as perceptions lodged in the minds of the viewers. A 1994 study led by Dan Berkowitz lent some support to a viewer-first, consultant-as-conduit model. In it, findings suggested that research inputs and audience surveillance--not the presence of news consultants per se--were the main criteria to which news managers were acclimated. They also were the probable elements leading to the socialization of newsworkers.[79] In the 1991 book *Making Local News*, Phyllis Kaniss interviewed many newsworkers who reiterated the comment of one, that "the operative principle we think about all the time is people, people, people."[80] It is unlikely such a view could be so

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widespread without direct input from the people themselves. A starting point for expanded investigation may be "news coorientation," a theory which accepts a balance between the degree newsrooms "lead" and "follow" the audience.[81] Local TV news may reside at the far end of the "followership" extreme. This may be a function of the fact that local television stations, unlike newspapers and networks, are licensed by the government and held accountable as "followers."

Finally, with a clearer picture of how research-consulting emerged, many new questions confront those who judge news consulting from a normative perspective. No individual has been more celebrated in critical research that Newton Minow, whose policy for redeeming the "wasteland" was systematically soliciting the interests and needs of the public. Curiously, in debates relating to standards for entertainment programming, the critical community applauded ascertainment at its inception and then pleaded that it continue during deregulation. Yet the same critical community deplored news consulting. The normative literature must make up its mind whether hearing the "voice of the people" is or is not desirable. A critique in the *New York Times* stated, "Those who oppose the broadcast consultants such as Magid do so on the ground that no one but a trained journalist should make judgments about news content."[82] Yet Minow and his associates plainly stated that the public shall have a voice in television programming. Explicitly, news was granted no exception.

NOTES

1. The seven nationally-based research consultancies include Frank N. Magid Associates, Marion, Iowa (140 clients); Audience Research & Development, Dallas, Tex. (110); McHugh & Hoffman, Southfield, Mich. (45); Broadcast Image, Inc., San Antonio, Tex. (40); Reymer & Associates, Detroit (35); Clemensen, Sheehan & Rovitto, Fairfield, Conn. (30); and Primo Newservices, Old Greenwich, Conn. (25).

2. Charles Butler, "Consulting Firms and Stations Forming a More Potent Partnership," *View*, Apr., 1988, pp. 22-24.

3. Roger David Maier, "News Consultants: Their Use By and Effect Upon Local Television News in Louisiana," paper presented before BEA, Apr., 1991; Betsey Peale and Mark Harmon, "Television News Consultants: Exploration of Their Effect on Content," paper presented before AEJMC, Aug., 1991.

4. Dan Berkowitz, Craig Allen, and Diana Beeson, "Newsroom Views About Consultants in Local TV: The Effects of Work Roles and Socialization," paper presented before AEJMC, Aug., 1994; Mary A. Bock, "Smile More: A Subcultural Analysis of the Anchor/Consultant Relationship in Local Television News Operations," Drake University masters thesis, 1986.

5. "Cronkite extols virtues of, need for longer news periods," *Broadcasting*, Dec. 20, 1976, p. 32.

6. Ron Powers, *The Newscasters*, (New York: St. Martin's, 1977), pp. 78-94.

7. Marvin Barrett, *Moments of Truth?*, (New York: Crowell, 1975), pp. 89-112; and Edwin Diamond, *The Tin Kazoo*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1975), pp. 87-109.

8. Useful period studies of community ascertainment appear Mark C. Hafer, "The Impact of Community Ascertainment: An Analysis of Television Station Ascertainment Reports to the F.C.C., University of Georgia masters thesis, 1980; and in John D. Abel, Charles Clift, III, and Frederick A. Weiss, "Station License Revocations and Denials of Renewal, 1934-1969," *Journal of Broadcasting* 14 (1970): 411-21.

9. See "Why Is Local TV News So Bad?," *American Journalism Review*, Sept., 1993, pp. 19-27.

10. See results of 1995 national Bullet Poll on local TV news in "Viewers give local news high marks," *Electronic Media*, Sept. 4, 1995, pp. 1, 29.

11. Frank Magid, interview with author, Marion, Iowa, June 17, 1993.

12. Peter Hoffman, interview with author, McLean, Va., June 20, 1994.

13. Gary A. Steiner, *The People Look at Television*, (New York: Knopf, 1963), pp. 304-305.

14. See In re Great Lakes Broadcasting Company, Docket 4900, (1928), RG 173, Office

of the Secretary, Records of FCC, Washington, D.C.

15. *Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees*, Pt. 5, Sec. A, FCC, Mar. 7, 1946, RG 173, Records of the FCC, Washington, D.C.

16. FCC Report and Order, 19 RR 1569, 601-1141, Sept. 21, 1960, Dockets, Records of the FCC, Washington, D.C.

17. U.S. v. RCA, 17 RR 764 (1959).

18. FCC Annual Report, 1958, p. 17, RG 173, Box 1, Dockets, Records of FCC, Washington, D.C.

19. Frederick Ford, testimony before Subcommittee on Appropriations, United States Senate, 86th Congress, 2nd Session, HR 11776:775, *Congressional Record.*

20. Programming Policy Statement, July 29, 1960, FCC 60-970, R.G. 173, Entry 35, Box 11, Office of Secretary, Records of FCC, Washington, D.C.

21. "FCC Still Sitting On 500 License Renewal Applications," *Variety*, Jan. 18, 1961, p. 51.

22. Newton Minow, interview with author, Chicago, Ill., Jan. 5, 1989.

23. "Minow Now FCC's Big Fish," *Variety*, Jan. 11, 1961, p. 31.

24. Text, Newton Minow speech before National Association of Broadcasters, Washington, D.C., May 9, 1961, R.G. 173, Box 1, Records Relating to Chairman Minow's Speech, Records of the Executive Director, Records of FCC, Washington, D.C.

25. Jay Lewis, "Some NAB Convention Post-Mortems," *Variety*, May 17, 1961, p. 33.

26. Programming Policy Statement, July 29, 1960, FCC 60-970, R.G. 173, Entry 35, Box 11, Office of Secretary, Records of FCC, Washington, D.C.

27. "A sharper FCC eye on programs," *Broadcasting*, Aug. 1, 1960, p. 35, 38.

28. Analysis of Letters Received, June 1, 1961, RG 173, Box 1, Records Relating to Chairman Minow's Speech, Records of the Executive Director, FCC Records.

29. Henry v. FCC, 302 F.2d 191; 371 U.S. 821 (1962).

30. FCC Rules and Regulations, 47 CFR 73.191 (1961), RG 173, Box 2, Office of the Secretary, FCC Records, Washington, D.C.

31. Kenneth Bagwell, interview with author, Phoenix, Ariz, May 14, 1994.

32. "How Doerfer's hopes died," *Broadcasting*, Mar. 14, 1960, pp. 32-33.

33. "Ford: Soft-spoken but firm," *Broadcasting*, Mar. 14, 1960, pp. 34-36.

34. "FCC Okays Storer Purchases," *Broadcasting*, Apr. 1, 1957, pp. 54, 58.

35. See "Retrospective: George B. Storer, Sr.," *Broadcasting*, Nov. 11, 1974, pp. 30-31; "Respects to George B. Storer, Jr.," *Broadcasting*, June 5, 1961, p. 107; and "Respects to Peter Storer," *Broadcasting*, Jan. 7, 1963, p. 89.

36. "Storer first quarter double that of '61," *Broadcasting*, Apr. 16, 1962, p. 74.

37. "A combination businessman, engineer, sportsman," *Broadcasting*, June 5, 1961, p. 107.

38. In 1965, Storer appealed to the FCC for television license in Miami, to have the call letters "WGBS," the initials of founder George B. Storer; Phil McHugh to Stanton P. Kettler, Apr. 14, 1965, Box 17, McHugh & Hoffman Records, Southfield, Mich.

39. "Storer Has Option On Toolco's 55% of Northeast Air," *Wall Street Journal*, June 3, 1965, p. 1.

40. *Storer Annual Report 1968*, Storer Broadcasting Company, Miami, Fla., July 1, 1969, pp. 2-3.

41. See "Program log comments get specific," *Broadcasting*, Oct. 21, 1961, p. 66.

42. Peter Hoffman, interview with author, McLean, Va., June 20, 1994.

43. Willard Michaels to George Storer, Jr., Phil McHugh, and Peter Hoffman, May 16, 1962, Box 16, McHugh & Hoffman Records, Southfield, Mich.

44. Warren Zwicky file, undated, Box 17, McHugh & Hoffman Records, Southfield, Mich.

45. *Primer on Ascertainment of Community Problems by Broadcast Applicants*, 57 FCC 2d 418, 441 (1976), Pt. C, Question 24.

46. Kenneth Bagwell, interview with author, Phoenix, Ariz., May 14, 1994.

47. Earl Kahn, interview with author, Scottsdale, Ariz., Mar. 14, 1994.

48. Peter Hoffman to Willard Michaels, May 9, 1963, Box 17, McHugh & Hoffman Records, Southfield, Mich.

49. Contact report, Phil McHugh and Terry Lee, Mar. 9, 1962, McHugh & Hoffman Records, Southfield, Mich.

50. Peter Hoffman, interview with author, McLean, Va., June 20, 1994.

51. "McHugh, Hoffman Form TV Consultancy," *Broadcasting*, Mar. 5, 1962, p. 58.

52. Contact report, Terry Lee and Phil McHugh, Mar. 3, 1962, Box 17, McHugh & Hoffman Records, Southfield, Mich.

53. "A Report to Storer Broadcasting Company," May 1964, p. 30, Box 17, McHugh & Hoffman Records, Southfield, Mich.

54. Phil McHugh to Willard Michaels, Aug. 13, 1962, Box 17, McHugh & Hoffman Records, Southfield, Mich.

55. Memorandum, Willard Michaels to Storer general managers, May 9, 1962, Box 17, McHugh & Hoffman Records, Southfield, Mich.

56. Kenneth Bagwell, interview with author, Phoenix, Ariz., May 14, 1994.

57. Terry R. Ellmore, *Broadcasting Law and Regulation*, (Blue Ridge Summit, Pa.: Tab, 1982), pp. 116-117; also see Abel, et al., "Station License Revocations," pp. 411-21.

58. Hafer, "Impact of Community Ascertainment," pp. 5-15.

59. "Renewal forms ready," *Broadcasting*, June 4, 1962, p. 5.

60. *Primer on Ascertainment of Community Problems by Broadcast Applicants*, 27 FCC 2d 650, 682 (1971).

61. *Primer on Ascertainment of Community Problems by Broadcast Applicants*, 57 FCC 2d 418, 441 (1976).

62. *Deregulation of Commercial Television*, 56 RR 2nd 1005 (1984), Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D.C.

63. Frank Magid, interview with author, Marion, Iowa, June 17, 1993.

64. "Continuing Trends in Television, 1962," Feb. 26, 1963, p. 14, McHugh & Hoffman Reports, Southfield, Mich.

65. Earl Kahn, interview with author, Scottsdale, Ariz., Mar. 14, 1994.

66. "Relationship Between Local TV Programming and TV Stations' Revenues," McHugh & Hoffman, Inc., undated, p. 11, McHugh & Hoffman Reports, Southfield, Mich.

67. "Television News Trends of the 1990s," Jan. 17, 1990, p. 7, McHugh & Hoffman Reports, Southfield, Mich.

68. Station Managers Questions file, 1962, Box 18, McHugh & Hoffman Records, Southfield, Mich.

69. Meeting minutes, McHugh & Hoffman and Storer general managers, Sept. 8, 1962, Box 17; and Willard Michaels to Storer general managers, Sept. 13, 1962, Box 17, both McHugh & Hoffman Records, Southfield, Mich.

70. Ira O. Glick and Sidney J. Levy, *Living With Television*, (Chicago: Aldine, 1962), p. 135.

71. "Continuing Trends in Television, 1962," Feb. 26, 1963, pp. 77-79, 83-84, McHugh

& Hoffman Records, Southfield, Mich.

72. Toledo report, July 1962, p. 60, McHugh & Hoffman Reports, Southfield, Mich.

73. Cleveland report, July 1964, pp. 61-62, McHugh & Hoffman Reports, Southfield, Mich.

74. Joseph R. Dominick, Alan Wurtzel, and Guy Lometti, "Television Journalism vs. Show Business: A Content Analysis of Eyewitness News," *Journalism Quarterly* 51: 213-218 (1974); Av Westin, *Newswatch*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), pp. 210, 222, 23; Powers, *The Newscasters*, pp. 147-157; Geraldo Rivera and Daniel Paisner, *Exposing Myself* (New York: Bantam, 1991), pp. 76-137; Joan Lunden, *Good Morning*, (New York: Berkley, 1987), pp. 69-104.

75. Peter Hoffman, interview with author, McLean, Va., June 20, 1994.

76. Karen Frankola, "Who Uses Consultants And Why?," *RTNDA Communicator*, Aug., 1990, p. 12.

77. Craig Allen, "Priorities of General Managers and News Directors in Anchor Hiring," *Journal of Media Economics* 8:111-24 (1995).

78. *Primer on Ascertainment of Community Problems by Broadcast Applicants*, 27 FCC 2d 650, 682 (1971), Part B, Question 37, and Appendix A.

79. Dan Berkowitz, et al., "Newsroom Views About Consultants," pp. 14-18.

80. Phyllis Kaniss, *Making Local News*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 120.

81. Hugh M. Culbertson, "Three Perspectives on American Journalism," *Journalism Monographs 83* (June 1983); Hugh M. Culbertson, "Reporters and Editors--Some Differences in Perspective," *Newspaper Research Journal* 2:17-27 (January 1981); and Steven Chaffee and Jack McLeod, "Sensitization in Panel Design: A Coorientation Experiment," *Journalism Quarterly* 45:661-669 (Winter 1968).

82. Johanna Steinmetz, "'Mr. Magic--The TV Newscast Doctor,'" *New York Times*, Oct. 12, 1975, p. 2-25.